

Reason against Raillery:

OR,

A Full Answer

TO

Dr. TILLOTSON'S

PREFACE

Against J. S.

With a farther

EXAMINATION

Of His

Grounds of Religion.

The gravest Book that ever was written may be made ridiculous, by applying the Sayings of it to a foolish purpose. Dr. Tillot. Sermon. p. 121.

Anno Dom. MDCLXXII.

Doctrinam Stulti despiciunt. Prov. 1. 7.

A Full Answer

PREFACE

EXAMINATION

LONDON: J. JOHNSON.

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IT being the general Temper of Mankind to call any thing by an odious Name which themselves dislike, and particularly the Humour of the Times to call every thing Popery which comes cross to their Interest, I cannot expect my present Adversary, whose Zeal (as will appear by the perusal of this Treatise) carries him much farther than his Reason, should be exempt from a Failing so Epidemical; and withal so Necessary for his Purpose. For nothing more easily solves all Arguments, or more readily Answers any Book with the Vulgar than this short Method; Inure them to a hideous apprehension of Popery, then call any Production by *that* Name, and all farther

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ther Confute is needless. With the *Vulgar*, I say, for I shall presume that whoever reads this Treatise will judge it Incredible Dr. T. should hereafter attempt to write to such as are truly *Learned*, till he thinks fit to settle and pursue some Conclusive Method of Discoursing; which I am sure he will not, because his Cause will not bear it. I am to expect then from the Disingenuity of my Opposers, that this Piece will be branded for *Popery*, thence the publishing it made an *Insolence*, and (to lay on more load) strai'd to an Immodest Abuse of the late Merciful Indulgence.

I am forc'd therefore to stop the Reader at the very Entrance, and to declare to him before-hand, that in perusing this Treatise he shall find that the Points at present maintained by me are onely these, That *Christian Faith* and the *Tenets of a Deity* are *Absolutely Certain*. If this be *Popery*, all the Sober and Well-meaning Protestants, Presbyterians, and almost all *England*, nay all True Christians are *Papists*; for not one of them who uses or
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discourses of the word [FAITH] but retains in his natural thoughts, (unless bad Speculation have corrupted Nature) this hearty conceit of it, that 'tis *absolutely impossible to be all a Ly for any thing any man living knows*; and abhor the contrary Tenet; that is, they are all on my side. If then Dr. T. does not in discoursing here the Grounds of Faith, sustain this contrary Tenet, and so violate the Nature of Faith, I have at present no quarrel with him, but be a very grievous one with me for wronging him; and I must acknowledge I owe him Satisfaction as publick as the Injury. If he does, all Protestants, Presbyterians, &c. have the same Quarrel with him I have, and so ought to joyn with *me* against *him*; and he will owe Satisfaction to them all, as well as to Catholicks, for corrupting the Nature of *Faith* (which we all acknowledge necessary to Salvation) into *Opinion*, and so quite enervating its force and influence towards bringing Souls to Heaven, as will be shewn hereafter.

I could alledge, to justifie my Writing at present, the earnest and daring pro:

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provocations of Dr. T. and his Friend, publicly in their late Books; also that this Treatise was near Printed ere His Majesties Gracious Declaration was Published. But I shall make use of no other Justification but the nature of my Cause, which is the Common Concern of all good Christians, and can never be unseasonable to defend, or be offensive to any who is heartily a Friend to Christianity, to see it defended. And, if any Clamours be rais'd against me for so doing, 'tis abundantly satisfactory to me that the World before-hand understands how worthy the Cause is for the maintaining of which I suffer this reproach.

TO



TO
The Knowing Candid WITS
of This Nation :

Especially Those who are an Ornament

To the

UNIVERSITIES,

And other Learned

SOCIETIES.

GENTLEMEN,

I know not to whom all Attempts to advance
Truth in any kind can more properly be-
long than to You, to whom Knowledge
gives Ability to discern, the profest Study of
Truth, Candour and Sincerity to own what You
discern, and both together a perfect Qualifica-
tion to be Judges in Affairs of this Nature.
The Enemies to Learning are Ignorance, and

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Passion: And take you to be as much above the later, as the World will witness you are free from all suspicion of the former. I have great reason to believe I am not mistaken in the judgment I make of You, and that few Nations can produce an equal number of Men so Acute to Discover the Truth, so Wise to Judge of it, and (speaking generally) so Unbiass'd to acknowledge it. This consideration gives me a high Esteem for your Authority, and that Esteem the Confidence to make choice of You for my Umpires. The wise Justice of this Nation has provided, that all differences betwixt contending Parties be try'd by their Peers; and though your dissenting from me, in some particular Points, might possibly cause Fealousie in one who was not well assured of his own Cause or your Integrity; yet the Interests of Learning are common to us both, and of the Right or Injury done to That, you are the Best, and peradventure Only Judges, and for that Point I confidently appeal to You.

Having made my Address, give me leave in the next place to declare my Case.

I had observed with much grief the Swarms of new Sects (not to mention the declining of many good Wits towards Atheism) which pe-
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fter our Country, and looking into the Causes of such sad Effects, it needed no great reach to discover, that the Fancies of men being both by Nature and Circumstances fram'd to great variety, it could not be expected but they should take their several Plies, and sway mens Thoughts and Actions accordingly, unless some Principle, Evident, in a manner, to all, should oblige the Judgment of the Wiser (at least) to adhere unanimously to the same Profession of Faith, and satisfy by Motives within their own ken, and even forestall, by the way of Nature, the irregular deviations to which weaker Fancies must of necessity be subject. Nor could I, nor indeed can any man think, but that as GOD, the Author of every perfect Gift, settled Faith most firmly at first in the hearts of the Primitive Believers by Evident Miracles, so he intended, and ordered, as far as was on His part, that it should continue all along the same; or, that his Church should persevere in Unity of Faith; and, consequently, that he settled such a Rule to convey the knowledge of it to us, as was of a nature able to establish it, and satisfy, according to their several capacities, both the Wise and the Unwise. Whence necessarily follows that all division about Faith is to be refunded into the faulty

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faulty unwariness of men who deflect from that Rule, not into want of fore-sight in the All-wise Founder of the Church, in leaving us such a Rule of Faith as should set us all on wrangling, instead of keeping us at Unity. These considerations discover'd to me that I could not bestow my pains better on any subject than in making known what was the Right Rule of Faith; and evidencing, to men Capable of Evidence, out of the Nature of the Thing in hand, that It had indeed the qualities proper to a Rule of Faith, that is, Virtue or Power to acquaint us that live now (without the least danger of Error) what Christ and his Apostles taught at first.

To this end, I shew'd first in Sure-footing that the Letter of Scripture had not this Virtue, and by consequence could not be the Rule intended and best us by Christ. Many Arguments I us'd from p. 1. to p. 41. though these two short Discourses are sufficient to convince the point to any who is not before-hand resolv'd he will not be convinc'd. First, that, that can never be a Rule or Way to Faith, which many follow to their power, yet are misled, and this in most Fundamental Points; as we experience in the Socinians and others. For I see not how it
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can consist with Charity, or even with Humanity, to think that none amongst the Socinians or other erring Sects endeavour to find out the true sense of Scripture as far as they are able, nor how it can be made out that all, without exception, either wilfully or negligently pervert it; and yet, unless it be shewn rational to believe this it can never be rational to believe that the Letter of Scripture, as useful and as excellent as it is in other respects, is the Rule of Faith; for, if They be not all wanting to themselves and their Rule, 'tis unavoidable that their Rule is wanting to them. Next, They who affirm the Letter is the Rule, must either say that the bare Letter as it lies, antecedently to and abstracting from all Interpretation whatsoever, is the Rule; and this cannot be with any sense maintained, for so God must be held to have Hands, Feet, Passions, &c. Or else, that the Letter alone is not sufficient to give us Assurance of Gods sense in Dogmatical Points of high concern, as the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. without the Assistance of some Interpretation; and, to say this, is to say as expressly as can be said, that the Letter of Scripture alone is not the Rule of Faith, since it gives not the Certain Sense of Christ without that Interpretation adjoyned:

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joyned: Nay more, since 'tis the nature of Interpretation to give the Sence of words, and the nature of the Rule of Faith to give us the Sence of Christ, this Interpretation manifestly is the Rule of Faith, and the Revelation to us who live now, of what is Christs Doctrine. I know it is sometimes said that the Letter may be interpreted by it self, a clear place affording light to one more obscure: but, taking the Letter as Antecedent to all Interpretation, as in this case it ought, I can see no reason for this Pretence. For let us take two such places; e.g. It repented God that he had made man; and, God is not as man that he should repent; abstract from all interpretation, and let him tell me that can of the two places taken alone, which is the clear, and which is the obscure one. Atheists will be apt to take such pretences to reject the Scripture, and impiously accuse it of Contradiction; but how that method can assist a sincere man, who hopes by the meer Letter to find his Faith, and hinder the Obscure place from darkning the Clear place; as much as the Clear one enlightens the Obscure one, I understand not. In fine, It exposes a man to the Scandal and Temptation of thinking there is no Truth in Scripture, but Absolute
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assurance of Truth it gives no man. Besides, the former of the Reasons lately given returns again : For the Socinians compare place to place as well as others; other Sects do so too, and yet all err, and some in most fundamental Points. Wherefore it must be either presum'd they all err wilfully, or the Way cannot be presumed a Right Way. Farther, it may be ask'd when one pitches upon a determinate sense of any place beyond what the Letter inforces, by what light he guides himself in that determination; and then shewn that that Light, whatever it is, and not the Letter, is indeed the Formal Revealer or Rule of Faith. Much more might be said on this occasion, but my business now is to state my Case, not to plead it.

The Letter-Rule secluded, I advanc'd to prove that Tradition, or that Body call'd the Church, which Christ by himself and his Apostles constituted, taken as delivering her thoughts by a constant Tenor of living Voice and Practice visible to the whole World, is the absolutely-certain way of conveying down the Doctrine taught at first, from Age to Age, nay Year to Year, and so to our time; which is in other Terms to say, that Pastors, and Fathers, and the conversant Faithful, by discoursing,
preach.

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preaching, teaching, and catechising, and living and practising, could from the very first, and so all along, better and more certainly make their thoughts or Christs Doctrine be understood by those whom they instruct, than a Book which lies before them, and cannot accommodate it self to the arising Difficulties of the Reader. I am not here to repeat my Reasons, they are contain'd in my Book which I call'd Sure footing in Christianity. And because I observ'd our improving Age had in this last half Century exceedingly ripen'd, and advanc'd in manly Reason, straining towards Perfect Satisfaction, and unwillingly resting on any thing in which appear'd a possibility to be otherwise; or, to express the same in other words, bent their thoughts and hopeful endeavours to perfect Science; I endeavour'd in that Treatise rigorously to pursue the way of Science, both in disproving the Letter-Rule, and proving the Living Rule of Faith: beginning with some plain Attributes belonging to the natures of Rule and Faith, and building my whole discourse upon them, with care not to swerve from them in the least. And being conscious to my self that I had, as I propos'd to do, closely held to the natures of the Things in hand, I had good reason to hold my first five
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Discourses demonstrative, which is all I need-
ed have done, as appears p. 57, and 58. the rest
that follow'd being added *ex abundantia*, and
express'd by me. An endeavour to demonstrate,
as by the Titles of the Sixth and Eighth Dis-
course is manifest, though I do not perceive by
the opposition of my Answerers why I should not
have better thoughts of them than at first I pre-
tended.

This is the matter of Fact concerning that
Book, as far as it related to me, and a true ac-
count why I writ on that Subject, and in that
manner: What thoughts I had of its usefulness,
and hopes it might prove serviceable towards
composing the differences in Religion, of which
the World has so long complained, though from
the long and deep meditation I must necessarily
have made upon those Principles, I may reason-
ably be judg'd to see farther into them, and know
better whether they will carry, than those who
look not so well thorow them; yet it being an
universal Temptation to flatter our selves with
our own Productions, I think best to omit. I
am next to declare what reception it found in
the World. Men are subject to several Tem-
pers, and Learned Men not exempt from the
weaknesses of Humanity. Candour and Obsti-

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nay divide Mankind: Some are fixt to nothing but Reason, and whenever that appears, whether Conformable or Opposite to their former Perswasions, they always follow It, striving to accommodate their Judgments to Reason, not Reason to their Judgments, and resolute to be of the party of Reason, of whatever party Reason be. Others are so fixt to their Perswasions that they can hardly be induced to believe what is Contrary to Themselves can be Agreeable to Reason, and will sooner believe Reason not to be Reason, than their own thoughts not reasonable. This crossness of nature is heightened by the unhappy circumstances of our Country, where the mixture of several Opinions, so strangely blended together, breeds a great partiality to those Perswasions which Men have taken up, and renders Reason less welcom and less effectual. My Book it seems, as it needs must, encountered with some of this Spirit, and immediately a loud noise was made against it, and a complaint of it to a Great Magistrate, as of a most pernicious Treatise. He believing his Information, testify'd much resentment, and express'd an intention of much severity against the Author; first Banishment, then Imprisonment in that Banishment, and the liberty of ever writing

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ring more to be debarr'd in that Imprisonment, for so far the Instigators prest it. And this was the First attempt to answer the Book, and I must confess a very strong one, and which oblig'd me to a very secret retirement. But it happened that a Person of Quality who had read the Book, gave a character of it that it was a serious Piece, that it took the way of sober Reason, and was far from the Information he had received of it, leaving one with him for his own perusal. From which time I heard no more of his resentment. I conceive it was not thought honourable to employ Authority against that which bore a semblance of Reason, and permit Power to be abus'd in defence of other mens heats, and possibly the less, where there was found a loyal deference to the State, p. 73. and elsewhere. Whatever the reasons were, the Threats were chang'd into a desire of a solid and home Answer, and this he recommended and prest often and earnestly. Hereupon five choice Persons whom I could name, met constantly on Munday (as I was inform'd) to consult and consider of it, which being all men of Parts and Business, was found to be the day of greatest leisure.

Mean time I became acquainted with several
Excellent

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Excellent Wits, to whose Civility I am as much obliged as I was satisfied of their Parts; particularly with Mr. Felton of Gonvil and Caius Colledge in Cambridge, in whom (not to speak of others) I found such a concurrence of Excellent Endowments, that I cannot but lament the loss of him as a great loss to Learning and the Nation; his Temper was sweet and friendly, his Discourse calm and unpassionate, his Wit acute and thoroughly penetrative, his Judgment, by attending heedfully to Principles, solid and steady, his Expression clear and natural; and to all this he joyn'd a Sincerity and Candour which none could see without Esteem. From him I receiv'd some Objections to my Book, of a strain far beyond what has since appeared; wherefore finding in him Ability to say all that could be said, and yet so much Candour as not to say what was not to purpose, I earnestly courted him by Letters to undertake the Answer, that the World might have the satisfaction of seeing the Truth impartially try'd, and my self secur'd from the fear of indirect dealing, and all pass without bitterness, and as a Great Man would have it, with the sweetness of Love-Letters. His modesty refus'd at first; yet second thoughts prevail'd with him. But Providence over-

rul'd

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ru'd my Hopes and Expectations of so learned and fair an Adversary, and to the grief of all that knew him, and the value due to learned Worth, particularly mine, took him soon after away; though, if I be rightly informed, not before he had preach'd at St. Mary's of the Absolute Certainty of Tradition, and ordered his Executors to burn all his Papers; among which I conceive were those against me.

Being thus defeated of my best hopes, and inform'd of the Junto of Five, I began to consider if I could by any means contribute to their Endeavours, and provide that the World might reap the benefit of a solid Satisfaction from our common labours. Wherefore I writ and printed a little Piece which I intitled, A Letter from the Author of Sure-footing to his Answerer; not out of vain glory to boast my self Author of that Book, as Dr. T. whose zealous Nature and Education, inclining him still to unhandsome misconstructions, puts upon me; but because, not knowing yet the Persons name, I could onely call him by the Answerer of Sure-footing, and so was to express my self by the opposite Relation I had to him as such. This Letter was full of Civility to the Protestant Party, though I said no more than I truly meant, and unoffensive to any.

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any. The sum of it was to desire that we might not abuse the World and our selves by Discourses not pertinent, but closely pursue the Point in hand in a method which might be truly Conclusive and Satisfactory; and if he lik'd not the way which I had propos'd, I humbly request'd he would assign any other, with which, provided he would shew it was Conclusive, I should be content. I heard some Queries were to be antecedently propos'd to me, either in Writing or in Print; but instead, as I conceive, thereof, a personal Conference was desired with Dr. Tillotson, and another worthy Gentleman; to which I consented readily, and when we met, discours'd freely, little suspecting the Return would prove so unsuitable to my open plainness. The next News I heard was the Answer it self, which came forth under the name of Dr. Tillotson, who whether he foresaw the unlucky success of a Rigorous Method, or that his Genius lay more for smart Irony than blunt Demonstration, or for whatever reason, He rejects the Method I had propos'd, and establishes no other instead of it, not assigning any reason why he did so, but that he had the same liberty to manage his Answer, which I had assum'd to prescribe Laws to it; whereas I had beforehand dis-

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disclaimed any authority of prescribing, and
only shew'd that Reason and the Satisfaction of
the World requir'd it. Much Wit there was
in his Book, and much Art, and much good
Language, but so little to the purpose, that Peo-
ple could not but suspect, as he handled the mat-
ter, his purpose was not to speak to purpose. Ge-
nerally he neglects the import of my Discourse,
and picks out here and there something from its
fellows, perverts and makes it fit to be laugh'd
at, and then laughs exquisitely at it. As if
any degree of wit will not serve to abuse and
find fault, and a little wit furnish a man for
Satyr, as he has since taught the World him-
self, Sermon. p. 123. 'Tis common with him to
deny the Conclusion, and alledge some pretty
plausible thing against It, and never take notice
of the Premises, or attempt the Proof on which
'tis built; a method against which Euclid him-
self has said nothing strong enough to be secure.
Near three parts of his Book impose wrong Te-
nets on me, changing constantly my Sence, and
sometimes my Words: And, whereas in things
subject to Reason no Scholar is bound to defend
more than himself maintains, He often puts
me to defend the Reasonings of other men.
As for Omissions and dextrous waving the

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Principal Difficulty, they are endless; And these and some other Prevarications of the like strain, are the Ingredients of that highly-applauded Book. The rest of its commendations are a delicate Style, a fair Print, and good Paper; whereof as the two last are of credit with the Vulgar, so I wonder to see the number of those who are carried away with the first. Yet it suits well with a prudential pitch, and such who are not much used to the strength of Reason, especially being accompanied with the advantage of being truly victorious over counterfeited Tenets, for in truth what he sets up most artificially, he pulls down most irrecoverably.

I was griev'd to see my well-meaning, and the pains I had taken for the benefit of my Country, so grossly checkt, and the more, to perceive by the loud applause given to such a Piece, that the peevishness whether of humour or faction, was either more numerous or more active than the sincerity of those who meant well. I thought fit to give a stop to this wild career of Passion and Partiality, and not being then in circumstances to make a full answer, principally for want of health, which was then so bad that I thought I should soon have ended this Dispute with my Life, I cursorily noted some few of its defects

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in a little Treatise, which, as Dr. Stillingfleet had advis'd me, I call'd a Letter of Thanks. In that I laid open in some signal passages of universal concern that he quite mistook the question, and so insincerely mis-represented in a manner the Whole, that his much-applauded Endeavours were indred no better than a well-worded Prevarication; and in short, by instancing in several particulars I made good that charge of divers faults which I have here laid against his Book. And being then in the heat of my first Resentments, and not judging it due to him who had provok'd me without occasion to conceal or diminish the faults of his Writing, I could not restrain the inclination of my Genius, which leads me to shew little respect to Those who shew none for Truth, but call'd his faults by their own course though true names. But I had soon occasion to be sorry my nature was not fram'd to more wariness. For letting my Book alone, an Argument ad hominem was us'd, of a temper much stronger than those which are forg'd in the Schools. I know not by what suggestions, but I know without other demerit more than I have here express'd, an Order was procur'd by his best Friends to seiz upon my person, and my Friends were inform'd by some

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Great Men, that if I were apprehended it was not possible to save my life. To inforce this Project, besides divers extravagant Calumnies, Information was given to Magistrates making me Guilty of doing more Good than it was almost possible any one single man should commit. I cannot accuse Dr. T. of having a particular hand in this unhandsome malice; onely I can with truth aver, that the laying open in my Letter of Thanks his Faults as a Writer, was (as appears by the circumstance) the immediate occasion of it; and that about that time I was told by an honest Protestant who convers'd with all three, that he judg'd in his conscience D.W. was civiler than to take such ungentile ways, and Dr. St. soberer or warier, but that I should have a care of Dr. T. for it was easie to discern by his words that, if it lay in his power to ruine me, he would do it. To the belief of which Information his known Genius and Humour contributes too much; which is (poor man!) to be a great Papist-hater, so that had Rome but one Neck, I know no man living more fit to be the Executioner and strike a speeding blow.

Against this Storm I had no shelter but a lurking hole; into which I retir'd the second time, and plac'd stricter Centinels of Care upon

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my Security. In this Confinement I began to write a very particular Answer to Dr. T's Book; intending when the conjuncture was more seasonable, and my ability sufficient, to publish it. But no favourable Crisis of this Morbus Animi appear'd. Time had not its usual influence upon Spirits implacably exulcerated, and the motion continued very violent, though the first Impulse were long past. When my Person appeared not, my Friends were found out, and a Family with which 'twas suspected I conversed, design'd for ruine: So exemplary virtuous and in all respects worthy, that should I speak what I know, I might perhaps be thought to flatter. Against these, while the rest of the Nation sat quiet in the undisturbed comfort of the general Mercy, the severity of the Law was prosecuted, and urged almost to the extremity before they could find out the reason of the partiality us'd to them, for they were very far from giving particular offence. At last, upon strict inquiry, they found that all this Anger sprung from my being seen at their House, though that was both a very little space, and long before; and that the same was intended against all who should entertain me.

The apprehension of the like inconvenience drove

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drove me from the circumstances in which I was, and which were all my Livelihood, nor could I easily find admittance any where. I understood this to signifie I was to be aw'd, at least by the apprehension of my Friends danger, if I were more careless of my self, from printing the Answer I had promised, was preparing, and was expected. However, I proceeded in it, though I must confess I found the Task sufficiently troublesome. For there being few passages in which my sence was not voluntarily perverted, and not one in which the nature of the thing in debate was rightly stated, and solidly prosecuted, my business still was by frequent repetition of my own words to set the discourse right again, which had been so industriously disordered: An employment which how wearisom and distasteful it is, those know who have been condemn'd to the like drudgery. My Papers were grown pretty bulky, when divers of my most Judicious Friends, solicitous of my Safety, dealt earnestly with me to surcease. They alledged that unpassionate Examiners might easily discover, by what had been done already, how frivolous and insignificant the whole way was which my Adversary took, and that another and more convincing Reply might possibly heighten the anger to fatal

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fatal extremities. That if I were less sensible of my own safety, I should yet have regard to my Friends and all Catholicks; that it was to be feared that an exception against a particular person, might in that Juncture be enhanc'd to a Crime of the Whole, and the crossing the humour or interest of that implacable Party, raise the storm of the Great Diana of the Ephesians, and give the Gospel-Trumpeters occasion to sound out aloud *Papa ad Portas*. To this was joyned (for why should I be ashamed to acknowledge my Poverty, into which that Persecution had driven me?) that I had written more then I was able to print. In fine, Authority and Reason, and Necessity prevail'd with me, and I forbore to finish what I had begun, and to publish what I had finish'd. But yet the desire I had to be instrumental in settling so important a Truth, suggested to me a middle way, which, as I hoped, would be incapable to be wrested into offence, so I saw plainly would be much more beneficial to the world, and to the Learned more satisfactory.

I had observ'd in the Sermon which Dr. T. call'd the Wisdom of being Religious, a Concession which amounted to this, that the very Tenet of a Deity might possibly be false. I saw
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the same sence often imply'd in his Rule of Faith, and p. 148. plainly own'd. I perceiv'd and knew all men of insight must needs perceive with me, that, as this was the onely material, so 'twas a full Answer to my Book; and rendred the disquisition whether this or that be the Rule of Faith very superfluous, if it might be maintained It had no Rule at all, nor was capable of any. For a Rule (speaking of an Intellectual Rule as both of us do) being a means to make us certainly know something to be a Truth, He who says that thing may possibly be false, or not be a Truth, says it neither has nor can have any Rule. I resolv'd therefore to write a Treatise in behalf of Christian Faith in common, in which I endeavour'd to demonstrate from all Heads I could invent that the Generality of Christians, or those who rely on the common Motives left by God to the Church (as I exprest myself in my Introduction) the assent called [Faith] must be Impossible to be False or Erroneous. And applying this to Dr. T. and his Adherents, who as I shew'd from his own words, granted his Assent built on that which he esteems his onely Rule of Faith, possible to be false, I concluded them beyond all possibility
of

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of evasion not to have true Faith, nor be truly Faithful. And this I conceive was to follow on my blow, as I had promised, it being unimaginable how the Controversie could be prest more home, than to conclude my Adversary and his whole Cause from the very An Est of Faith, the Subject of our Dispute; nor how his whole Book, which he calls the Rule of Faith, can be more fundamentally overthrown than by shewing from his own words and the Nature of the Thing, that his mis-called Faith has no Rule at all, nor can have any. I conceiv'd too that this was to make good the engagement into which I had enter'd, to force them either to lay Principles which would bear the Test, or let all the world see they had none. For, in case they did manifest their Faith Impossible to be False, they must of necessity build it upon such Grounds as would sustain such a Building; if they did not, the World must needs judge by their silence that they had none, and that they knew and confest they could not evidence themselves truly Faithful and right Christians. I saw besides that this method permitted me to pursue a rational close way of Discourse, without the continual interruption which the insisting upon my Adversaries mistakes must needs

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occasion; which, as it was more satisfactory to me, and more creditable to my Cause, so I judg'd it more beneficial to the intelligent Reader; for a particular Answer must of necessity be made up for the greatest part of accusations, where the Answerer thinks it his best play to mistake all along, instead of direct confuting: I cannot say I am in the right, but I must say likewise that who says otherwise is in the wrong, and that he either misunderstands or misrepresents, and this either ignorantly or wilfully; to show which is a task no more pleasant to the Reader than the Writer, People being of opinion, and I think they have great reason, that the time and pains spent in such wranglings might with much more advantage be employ'd in convincing the Truth in question. Lastly, my aim was from the beginning to bring Controversies to a Conclusion, in order to which I had proposed a Conclusive Method; my Adversary neither accepted of mine, nor proposed any other of his own, as I had desired; And I saw that by proceeding with him in his talking fashion, the Point might come to be lost in a Wilderness of Unconnected Words: Wherefore I judg'd it better to pursue my design more closely, and by the bare stating the Nature of Christian Faith,

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Faith, to reduce all Disputes to this short Period; Either produce and vouch such Grounds for your Faith as are Impossible to be False, or 'tis evident you have none. It seem'd by the Event the way I took was not ill chosen. Dr. T. being still able to boast his Book was not particularly answer'd, and so uphōld his Credit with those who look not deeply into Things, seem'd by his silence well-appeas'd; and I heard of no more extraordinary Anger against me. And for my part I was contented that superficial People should judge as their wit serv'd them; it being abundant satisfaction to my Labours that Intelligent and Instructed Persons might perceive by them how matters stood, and into how narrow a compass Controversie was reduced. And of this I have ample experience from the most Judicious of our Nation, who unanimously assur'd me that it was impossible to carry things farther, or bring Controversie to a shorter Method, since now the whole Cause depended upon one single Proposition, by the sole examination of which it was to be decided.

Thus stood the Controversie, and thus for some years it rested. For the future I intended when it might be seasonable to write onely such Grounds as I judg'd might be a solid Founda-

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tion for Union, which as I have always look'd upon as the best of Works. so I know 'tis Impossible, till order be first taken to secure the Absolute and Immoveable Certainty of Faith it self, which I think is not otherwise to be done, then by shewing how and which way it comes to be Certain.

In this Calm I heard several reports that the two Doctors wondred at my silence, which they interpreted weakness, and despair of an Unmaintainable Cause; and that I might not pretend want of means for my disability, some of their Friends offer'd to get any thing printed which should concern either of them. But I was not stirred, till a Gentleman of Quality and Worth, who, for his friendship, as I conceive, to Dr. T. believ'd his Book truly unanswerable, offer'd a Friend of mine to prevail with him to get Licence for me to print an Answer, if I would or could make any. So fair an invitation mov'd me to accept of it, and I sollicit'd, with as much earnestness as I could, the performance. But the Gentleman it seems mistook the Doctors Humour as much as his Book, for his Credit prevail'd not. All seem'd bush'd and quiet, when Dr. St. publishes a private Paper writ two years and an half before, with a Reply swell'd into a large

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large Book, intitl'd, A Discourse concerning the Idolatry, &c. In the Preface to which, and elsewhere, he insults over my silence, which he calls leaving my poor Demonstrations alone to defend themselves, and with keen Ironies upbraids my pretence to Principles and Demonstration, which in his language is but Canting. Of all things in the world I should not have expected such an Objection from a Scholar. For, certainly, whoever writes on a serious subject so as to confess he has not concluded what he maintains, is an impudent Tri-
fler; and how to Conclude without Principles and Demonstration, is a thing not known to any Logick which has hitherto appear'd in the World. Dr. St. would deserve wonderfully of Learning and the World, if he would please to teach us this admirable new Logick of Concluding without demonstrating, and demonstrating without Principles, for in the dull way of Learning hitherto in use, 'tis so far from shameful in a Scholar to own he has demonstrated what he pretends should be assented to, that 'tis unpardonably shameful to pretend another mans assent to that which he does not pretend and judge to have demonstrated.

I had not time to settle the thoughts which
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these and the like passages stirr'd up, when I met with the Preface to Dr. T's Sermons, directed particularly to me, and meant, as far as I can guess, for an Answer to two or three Books. I must confess the bitter smartness I found there, and the piquant upbraiding me with deserting the defence of Sure-footing (though all men that car'd to consider any thing, saw I had already writ two Books in defence of it) stirred me sufficiently; but I know not whether all this provoking Raillery would have prevail'd with me to Answer particularly, if I had not thought they would not have urged me so pressingly, if their Friends had not indeed desired I should write, and that certainly I should not offend sober Men of what Perswasion soever, by doing onely what themselves so prest. Warier People have indeed suggested to me that the desires of Adversaries are suspicious, and the more because of the Time they had both chosen, since they could not but fore-see mine and others Answers would in likelihood come out about the time when the Parliament was designed to sit, which might be look'd upon as a proper season to inflame the minds of such as were apt to believe them, and stir up a new Persecution by making those Answers which themselves had so provokingly

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kingly and peremptorily prest for, an argument of the Insolency of Papists, and the growth of Popery. At least I see there can be no greater security for one in my circumstances, than to mean uprightly; and I hope every Body will see by my long silence I have used all the caution I can not to give just cause of offence, and will acknowledge that 'tis none to write, when I am pressing and publickly solicited, and this with no other design than to contribute, if I can, to the long desired happiness of bringing Dissputes and Disagreements in Religion to a period. If this be Insolence or Crime, I think there is no honest man in this Nation or World who is innocent. Once more then I take my Pen in hand, with this promise to Dr. T. and his Friend, that if it be not stopt again by their indirect proceedings (as I have reason to judge the Printing of this has been already by the diligent Searching for it) they shall have no reason to complain of any Arrears of mine.

But what needs any Apologizing at present to prevent a sinister character of my Writing. The Point in hand now is neither the defending any Tenet of Protestant or Presbyterian on Dr. T's side, nor the impugning them, on mine. The main business controverted between him
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and me at present, is, whether Faith be Absolutely-Certain, or rather (as he calls it) onely Morally such. In which Point I doubt not but to have all unprejudic'd conscientious men of both those Parties now nam'd on my side, and against Him. There is creeping into the World insensibly, and Scepticism is now hatching it, a Sect more dangerous than any that hath hitherto dissented from the Church in particular points: They go as yet under the name of Christians, because they profess many perhaps most Points of Christianity, but yet, if we may trust their own Expressions so as thence to frame a Judgment of them, have notwithstanding no Faith at all, or no hearty firm immoveable Assent to those Points, or any of them, as Certain Truths, but onely a dwindling Apprehension, or at most, a good lusty Hope that by the grace of GOD they are True; or at least may be True. Now these men, on the one side owning no Infalible or Absolutely - Certain Authority, so to preserve the Nature of Faith inviolate, or defend it from the weakness of their Speculation; that is, to protect it from Possibility of being an Errour; on the other side, relying either on some Authority hic & nunc Fallible, that is, which they see may perhaps be actually deceived

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giv'd in all it proposes, or else on their own Speculation and Wit, whether exercis'd in arguing from things, or in interpreting Scriptures Letter; and withal being men of some parts, and so, seeing it impossible to make out that either those Reasons are Conclusive or Demonstrative, or that their Interpretation of Scriptures Letter is not possibly a Mistake; hence they are forc'd to confess in equivalent Terms, all Christian Faith may possibly be a Ly; though they express it warily and craftily, because they see the nature of Faith in the conceit of the Generality who use that word, and the whole Genius of Christianity is opposite to their Sentiments in that point. Nature therefore standing against them, necessitates them (contrary perhaps to their intention, taking them in other circumstances) to pursue indirect ways; and so at unawares, though certainly not without some mixture of carelesness and precipitant passion, to undermine the solid Foundation of Faith. The means by which they work this mischief, is, First, to laugh at Principles and Demonstration, that is at all absolutely Certain Grounds and Conclusions; which if they can bring in to disgrace and contempt (as they hope they may because such reflexions are unusual and unju-
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ble to the Fancies of the Generality) they see plainly their work is done, and that all Infallibility and Absolute Certainty which stands against them because they can with no show of Reason pretend to it, must be quite overthrown. The next way they take, is, to abuse with Ironies any man who offers or attempts to settle Faith on immovably Certain Grounds, as Confident Swaggering men, or vapouring Dogmatists; as if it were such a piece of Confidence to say and go about to maintain, that Christian Faith cannot possibly be a lying Imposture, or that God cannot deceive us in the Grounds he has laid for his Church to embrace Faith. A third means they use, is, to abuse and baffle the nature of True Certainty, by clapping to it the Epithet of Moral, and then proposing that to the World, dilating upon it, and fitting it to Faith as well as they are able; which conception being suitable to the Fancies even of the weakest, they hope it will take with those who reflect not that the Basis of Mankind's Salvation must be incomparably more secure than that which we usually have for the attainment of a Bag of Money, a Place at Court, Merchandise from the Indies, and such-like trivial Concerns. Fourthly, they avoid by all means looking

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looking narrowly into the Natures of Faith, Truth, Assent, Demonstration, Principles, or shewing the necessity of Consequence for any thing they produce, and above all settling themselves, or yielding to any Conclusive Method of Discoursing propos'd by others, or any other things equivalent to these; and in their stead they are given to talk much of Probabilities, Fair Proofs, Great Likelihoods, More Credible Opinions, Prudential Reasons, or such as are fit to satisfy prudent men in Humane Affairs, of not-doubting, seeing no just cause of doubt, and such-like bashful and feeble expressions, which they dress up plausibly, and talk prettily, and doubt not but by this means to find Understandings enow so shallow as to admire their superficial gayness. This is the Character of this dangerous Sect, of which what opinion we are to have, or by what name to call them, this short Discourse will inform us.

If we know any thing of Christianity, or have any notion of what is meant by that word, 'tis questionless this, that 'tis a means to attain Bliss or Heaven by; nor does any Christian doubt but that it performs this by raising us to a vigorous Hope of it as a thing attain-

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able, and to an ardent and over powering Love of it, in Christian Language call'd Charity, as also that both these excellent Virtues are built upon the Basis of Faith, this being as S. Paul calls it, the substance of things to be hoped for, the Argument (that is, the Conviction) of things unseen: Again, common Reason informs us that the Assent of Faith depends on its Grounds; and consequently cannot be stronger than They are. These things understood, let us consider how Impossible 'tis that any one should have an efficacious Hope and a Love of Heaven, while he judges himself capable to understand all the Grounds of it as to our knowledge, and yet sees they may be all False, and consequently that perhaps there is no such thing as this thing call'd Heaven. Can any one that is not Frantick, connaturally hope for and love effectually a thing which he sees perhaps is not, or has not absolute Certainty of its Existence? A Merchant hopes and desires Wealth from the Indies, but then he holds it absolutely True, that there is in Nature such a Thing as Wealth, and that it is not a Chimera, else he were mad either to hope or desire it: and stark mad to love it above all things, (as we must do Heaven) even above the dearest Goods he at present sees,
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experiences, possesses and actually enjoys. Wherefore, (to omit diverse Arguments produc'd for this point in Faith vindicated, from p. 144. to p. 164.) 'tis concluded that the denying any Grounds for Faith, but what we see are onely-morally Certain, that is, possible to be false, is unable to breed that disposition in the Soul as fits it for Heaven, and so (as far as is on its part) destroys the nature of Christianity, (or the means to carry Souls to Heaven) in those men who see that what they are to love above all things is perhaps a Chimera; wherefore, being by this means destitute of the nature of Faith and Christianity, they are concluded (taking them precisely as holding this Tenet of Faiths possible Falsehood) to be in reality no Christians, though they should profess all the points of Faith that are. How Catholics that Speculate amiss, become not liable to this Note, I have shown in Faith Vindicated, p. 129, 130. and elsewhere in this present Treatise.

If these men then be not indeed or in True Speech, Christians, what must we call them? Seekers! No: For these, though they judge they have not yet found out certainly what is Truth, yet they hold 'tis to be found, and
thence

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thence continue to enquire after it : Whereas these men are doubly Irrational ; First in resting satisfied whenas they see they have not yet found out certainly that what they hold to is Truth ; and, which is much worse, equivalently say that it cannot be found out to be Truth, by saying the nature of the thing cannot bear it. Atheists or Fews they are not, because they deny not the Tenet of a Deity, or Christianity, though they do not hold them absolutely Certain. Nor yet are they, taken under this notion, Hereticks ; For those deny still some point of Faith or other ; whereas these men may deny none, but hold all, and yet be what they are ; their Error consisting in a wrong apprehension concerning the Grounds or Certainty of Faith, which renders all the Points of Faith Ineffectual for what they were intended. Whence the malice of this Tenet is something above that of Heresie, as not destroying some one or a few Points, but quite enervating all Faith. Nor yet are they meer Scepticks in Religion, or hovering indifferently between the opposite sides of the Contradiction ; but they bend strongly towards thinking it True. They are therefore certain Incliners to Christianity, or Deemers that 'tis True ; and, not of the [FAITHFUL] that is, Holders

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Holders of a Deity or Christs Doctrine, but rather of the [HOPEFUL.] For, whereas Faith being a firm Belief or Assent that Christs Doctrine is True, and so settles the existence of of it (and particularly of a Heaven) in our minds antecedently to Hope of attaining Heaven, these men substitute Hope to Faith, and onely Hope those Points are true, or in all likelihood may be true: Whence, though this be a good name (I must not say to Christen them, but) to call them by, yet perhaps their own dear word Moral will best suit with their Genius; and so we may call them Moral Christians, which Epithet being opposite to Absolute, signifies they are not absolutely Christians; and since nothing is indeed that which 'tis not absolutely, it's true sence is, that they are indeed no Christians; yet since they like the word [Moral] so extremely well when they are to express the certainty due to Faith, 'tis but fitting they should wear it when we express them as Faithful. Though then [The Hopeful] seems very well to represent their humour, yet 'tis but fitting they should have the Priviledge of naming themselves, and Moral Christians let them be,

Against these Moral Christians, and Them onely, I discourse in this present Treatise. But
what

Preface.

what have I to do with the Persons? I doubt not, but Gods Goodness (the Method of whose Gracious Providence is to support the Failings of his Creatures as far as the Natures of Particular Things and the Order of the World will permit) very often supplies the Defects of Mens Speculations with Connatural ways of Knowledge, fixing them thus in a strong Adherence to the most Concerning Truths, by ways which even their unreflecting selves are not aware of: Whence, I am the farthest from judging any Mans Person perhaps of any living, and endeavour all I can to retain a Charitable Opinion even of Dr. T's Personal Intentions in common, and excuse him diverse times in this very Treatise where I write against him, as far as Evidence of the contrary will give me leave. 'Tis this wicked Tenet then (and it onely) which I combat at present, and which I see plainly so unsettles, unhinges, and renders useless and ineffectual all Christianity, that I ought to declare an utter and irreconcilable Enmity against It: and that I shall, through GOD's Assistance, prosecute it home to the very doors of Scepticism, (the Bane of all Humane Science as well as Faith) in whose gloomy Grott, situate in the Confiner of dark Ignorance, (Mankind's

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Natural Hell) they first saw the twilight, or rather indeed were born blind.

Yet it cannot be expected that, declaring, as I do, a just Indignation against this wicked Temper, I should treat a Writer favourably, considering him precisely as a Maintainer of it; or bear my self respectfully to those insincere and unhandſome Methods and Ways which he makes use of to abet It, and prejudice the Sacred Truth it opposes; whether those ways be Sophisms in Reasoning, or else Scurrility supplying the place of Reason, the main Engine employ'd in this Preface. I shall then take a little of that much liberty he uses, to give them the Entertainment and Return due in Justice to their Demerits. Yet, that I may avoid all just occasion of offence, I shall endeavour for the most part to use his own words, (omitting still the rudeſt) hoping he will have less Reason to be angry at his own Echoes, since if he had not Originiz'd it, it had not reflected. And if he assum'd to himself the freedom to abound so with Irony, and wholly neglect speaking to my Reasons, of which (whatever they be) none can deny but that I use to have good store in my Writings; I hope it will not be indecent if now and then I speak to those plausible Ironies themselves, there being nothing else

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to refute; otherwise, since according to Dr. T's Method of Disputing, these are my onely Confuters, and full of Brag and Triumph, he and his Friends would most certainly have pretended, as they did formerly on the like occasion, that Inability to reply had caus'd my desistance. I come then to examine this spruce Preface; in doing which, I must be forc'd to lay open at large his knack of answering Books, that so I may have just Title to make some Requests to You our Umpires, in behalf of the Rights proper to Learning: Declaring before-hand, that where-ever I am large in any Discourse becoming a Scholar, 'tis not a Duty paid to his Preface, which has nothing like a show of solid Scholarship in it, but a Respect due to You, our Learned Judges, to whom I Appeal.

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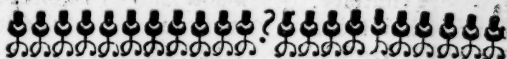
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A Full



A Full Answer to Dr. T's Preface,
with an Examination of his
Grounds of Religion.

DISCOURSE I.

Clearing the way to the following ones by manifesting his two Fundamental Exceptions to be perfectly Injust, and voluntarily Insincere.

§ 1. **H**is Preface begins (p. 3.) with two Charges, viz. That I still persist to maintain after so fair an Admonition, that first and self evident Principles are fit to be demonstrated; to which he adds a Third, that I make Identical Propositions to be First Principles in the matter under dispute. He argues too against the two former imaginary Assertions of mine (which in this Preface is a rare thing) thus, p. 37. *There can be nothing to make First Principles more Evident, because there is nothing before them to demonstrate them by.* And I acknowledge the reason given to be as victorious as any passage in his *Rule of Faith*, where he has

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multitudes of such wrong-aim'd Arguments ; intended, I conceive, to shew how far his Reason can carry when it shoots at rovers, for 'tis levell'd at no mark. But observe, I beseech you, Gentlemen, how I am dealt with, and let these two leading Cases, discovering his way of Confute, obtain a just suspence of your Judgments concerning all his other performances till you see them examined.

§ 2. In *Sure footing* p. 114. 2d Edit. (which I fl quote) I deduc'd two Propositions ; the former that *Tradition is the First Principle IN WAY OF AUTHORITY* as it engages for matter of Fact long ago past ; or, as in other places I therefore name it, **FIRST AUTHORITY** ; because 'tis manifest that the Authentication of Books and Monuments all depend upon Tradition. The other was this, *Tradition in the matter of Tradition, or matter of Fact before our time, is self-evident to all those who can need the knowledge of such things, that is to all Mankind who use Common Reason : that is, self-evident Practically, or by ordinary converse with the world* (See *Sure f. Disc. 1. §. 12.*) it being impossible to conceive that those words [*all Mankind who use Common Reason*] should mean *Speculators*. And it seems very consonant to Reason, that if the Vulgar must rely on and use *Attestation*, as 'tis manifest they must, they should (since they are not Scholars) know by a *natural* means that 'tis to be rely'd on. The fair *Admonition* which he speaks of for these two Faults of mine, is found *Rule of Faith* p. 47. where I am soberly warn'd to *take heed*
how

how I go about to demonstrate *First and Self-evident Principles*. Which, first, is no fair return to a Scholar, to fall to exhort him with *Fatherly Admonitions* not to hold his Conclusion (I mean that which is *suppos'd* his Conclusion) without speaking at all to his Premises : Next, 'tis far from fair in another regard which I am loth to mention, to pick out of those two Propositions now mentioned those two words *First Principle* and *Self-evident*, so closely woven there with other words to make up that one notion call'd the *Predicate* in either of them ; by this means making the Readers apprehend that I made *Tradition* not first [IN WAY OF AUTHORITY] onely, as I had express'd my self, but one of those Principles which are the very first of all, or, as himself expresses it, such as *have nothing before them* ; as also that I made *Tradition* (or the Attestation of a visible matter of Fact by so great multitudes as nothing can be imaginable to have byass'd them, as I had often express'd my meaning) not self-known *Practically*, but *Speculatively* ; that is, of the self-same nature with the very First Principles of all ; such as are 'Tis impossible the same thing should be and not be, A whole is greater than a part, and such-like. Observe next I beseech you, that all his confute is intirely built on his carriage here laid open ; for he attempts not to shew that *Tradition* is not that which Principles, Grounds, or which is all one *Authenticates* all other Authority, or that 'tis not *self-known practically*, but all the Cry and Irony is spent upon my ridiculousness in proving *First and self-evident*

Principles, and this because they have *nothing before them* and need *no evidencing*. How? **NO-THING** before them! Does not every Scholar who ever read or studied the *Subordination of Sciences* know very well that what is a *First Principle* to the *Inferiour Science*, is a *Conclusion* to the *Superiour*! Does not all Mankind know that *Maxims of Reason* are before *Authority*, and that *No Authority* deserves *Assent* farther than *Right Reason* gives it to deserve? Does not the meanest *Speculator* know that most of the employment of learned men is to make out *speculatively*, by looking into *Proper Causes*, what is *naturally* or *practically* known to the *Vulgar*? An old *Wife* knows by *practice* that such an herb cures such a malady; are *Naturalists* therefore forbid to make out according to the nature of *Causes* how or by *what virtue* it performs that effect? The *vulgar* have a *rude* yet *true* knowledge of what is meant by *Hot* and *Cold*, *Moist* and *Dry*; Is it *needless* therefore for *Philosophers* to *define* them *artificially*, and so gain a *more express* notion of their natures? Is it *needless* for *Picture-drawers* to delineate with *curiosity* and *exactness*, because some *Country-fellow* can draw a *rude*, yet *right*, resemblance of a face upon a wall with a piece of *charcoal*? Or for learned men to *polish* their knowledge and make it *accurate* and *distinct*, because the *vulgar* know the same thing *bluntly*, *confusedly* and in *gross*? Lastly, Is *Art* *needless* because there is *Nature*? Yet this is the very case: The *vulgar* know *practically* that there was such a one as *K. James*; yet 'tis not *needless*

less for one who is treating of the nature of *Authority* to make out *speculatively* that their knowledge is rightly grounded on the nature of *Man-kind*, and *how* this assurance is wrought in them out of the *practically-instill'd* knowledge of that nature.

§.3. But what I most complain of, because (which I am loth to say) it argues a perfect wilfulness of Insincerity, is this; that after I had in my *Letter of Thanks* p. 10. offered my Proof that First Principles were Identical Propositions, and could be no other; Also after that p. 24, 25. I had shown that things *practically self-evident* may be *demonstrated*, and produc'd divers instances, as that the vulgar know the Diameter of the Square is a nearer way than to go by the two sides. that things seen afar off are not so little, as they seem, which yet Mathematicians demonstrate, and none apprehends them to do a needless action: Dr. T. not so much as attempts to answer either my Instances or my Reasons, but perfectly conceals them from his Reader; and bears himself all along triumphantly, as if I had produc'd none at all, barely says over again his own raw sayings a little more merrily, and there's an end. I beseech you, Gentlemen, would this be held a competent Answer in the University-Schools; First, to admonish the Defendant to relinquish his Conclusion instead of beating him from it by Reason; then to combat the Conclusion instead of invalidating the Premises on which 'tis built; next to pick a word or two out of those Conclusions which taken alone alter

their whole sence, and then confute onely that new sence his designed alteration had given them; and lastly, when he was told of it, his mistakes rectified, Reasons and Instances brought to make good the *true* point, to neglect them all, say over again barely what he had said before, break a jest or two upon a ridiculous point meerly invented by himself, and then cry victory! Certainly, though such performances may serve a *Previcator* or a *Terra Filius*, yet some wiser kinde of return ought in reason to be expected from a Scholar and a sober man.

As for that point which he most confutes with laughter, viz. That First Principles are Identical Propositions, though something has been produc'd in my Letter of Thanks in the place cited, and not yet answered, and so no farther proof is due or needful; yet because the clearing this point fundamentally conduces to settle the way to Science, therefore for their sakes who are truly learned and aim at solid improvement of their minds by *exact knowledge*, more than at pleasing their ears by *pretty expressions*, I shall treat the point more accurately. The stating the nature of First Principles must needs be Speculative, therefore those Readers who pretend not to Science may please to pass over these two Discourses, and go on to what follows: though I shall endeavour as well as the matter will bear, to deliver it so, that a good natural Wit may in great part comprehend it.

DISCOURSE II.

*Shewing by Reason that every First Principle
is an Identical Proposition.*

THe great Architect of the Universe knew in Himself, or saw clearly and distinctly in his own Divine Understanding, what he intended to make, and this to the least thing in Nature, as is granted by all who hold such a Sovereign Being : Also, there being nothing able to check or cross his omnipotent Efficiency, we cannot doubt but they flow'd from that First Source of all Essence and Being without any Error, Mistake, or (as we may say) monstrous Abortion, but perfectly adjusted and proportion'd according to their several degrees of Being, to the *Idea's* in the Divine Understanding of their Creator. Hence each of them gain an *Establishment* in their Peculiar Natures or the respective Portions of Being assign'd them, (or rather which they essentially are) and a kind of participated Immutability and Eternity by their Conformity, Proportion or Essential Relation to those Divine Ideas. Wherefore since all our Knowledge is either taken from the Things, or else proportion'd to them ; also since there neither is nor can be any consideration in things so primary, so fundamental or immoveably grounded as is this, 'tis manifest that the First, most firm and

most deeply grounded Truth which can be conceived or spoken of any thing, is, that 'tis *established* thus *immutably* in its proper Nature by this Sovereign Relation to what's essentially Immutable. Wherefore, if the First Principles of all, must be the most Primary, most Fundamental, and most immoveably-grounded Truths of all other, 'tis most evidently concluded that the very First Principles can be no other but those Propositions which express the *establishment* of Things in their very natures, or their *being what they are*, which can no other way be expressed but by *Identical Propositions*.

§. 2. Also, a Definition being granted by all the learned world a chief Instrument to Science; if any thing could maintain a competition with *Identical Propositions* to be the very first Principles, certainly *Definitions*, of all other, seem to have the best claim. But what I contend is, that there is some consideration taken from things antecedent to their Definitions, viz. their Capableness or Possibility of being defin'd; Common sense teaching us that the *Power* to be such, naturally goes before *Actually* being such. To declare this, I desire the nature of a Definition may be look'd into, which is to assign by way of expression the certain *bounds* and *limits* of such a Nature, that so way may be made to Science: But in case the Thing could bear two disparate Definitions, first a Contradiction would follow, for neither of these two imagin'd Definitions would be in reality any at all, since neither of them would *describe* the *certain limits* of that nature; Next if the Thing could

could bear more Definitions than one, the Discourser about it would be never the nearer to Science, but in a perfect Confusion; now considering it *thus*, now *not thus*, but *otherwise*; so that no Discourse could proceed for want of a steady Basis to ground it, and make its several parts center in one point, or tend to one end. Wherefore the Thing must be antecedently establish'd to be incapable to bear more Definitions than one, else no right Definition could be made of it, nor any thing be *known* concerning it: Now that which establishes the Thing in an Impossibility to bear but *one* true Definition, is its *Metaphysical Verity* and *Unity*, or its *being what it is*; which frees its nature from *Chimericalness* and *Division* in its self, whence it becomes intelligible, or capable to be known, express'd, *defin'd*, and discours'd of. Wherefore the Things *being what it is*, is that which not onely Grounds all *Definitions*, but even all *Possibility* of defining; and this it participates (as was said) from its *Essential Relation* and *Dependence* on the *Immutable Ideas* or *Forms* in his *Divine Understanding* who is *Unchangeable Truth* it self. 'Tis concluded therefore that *Identical Propositions*, which express a Things *being what it is*, are antecedent in priority of nature to *Definitions*, and consequently the very *bottom Principles* of all Science. Nay *Definitions* themselves, which all the world admits for *Principles* of our *Discourses* about the thing defined, are in reality nothing else, setting apart the manner of expression, but *Identical Propositions*; for 'tis the self-

same

same sence to say, *A Man is a Rational Creature*, as to say, *A Man is a Man*; nor were the Definition as it should be, if it were not Identical in sence. So that, if he quarrel with First Principles for being Identical, or for having a Subject and Predicate which are of the same notion, and not for being ~~worded~~ alike (the reason of which shall be given anon) he must deny the use of Definitions too, and by so doing oppose all the learned men in the world.

§. 3. Thus far Metaphysicks. Let us see next what Logick says to the Point. To *Conclude*, is to show evidently that *two notions* we call the *Subject* and *Predicate* are identify'd or truly connected in that Proposition we call the *Conclusion*. To do this, we find a *Third* notion call'd a *Middle Term*, to be identify'd with those two in the Premisses, whence we infer them to be the same with one another, and consequently assert the Truth of the Conclusion. But, how shall we know that third notion to be truly connected with those two others; that is, how shall we know the *Major* and *Minor* Propositions to be true? By finding (if they need proof) another *Medium* connected with the two Terms found in each of Them. And how far must this go on? Endlessly, or no? If endlessly, then, since every following Connexion is proved by some *foregoing* ones, in case we cannot come to see some *First* Connexion (or *First Principle*) we could conclude or evidence nothing. And how must we evidence the Connexion of the Terms (or of the Subject and Predicate) in these

First

First Principles ? By another Antecedent Connexion of their Terms with a Third ? No : for these are suppos'd the *First* Connexions : Wherefore since they cannot be evidenc'd by any thing *out of themselves*, and yet must be evident, else nothing could be evidenc'd by them, it follows that they must be evident *of themselves*, or *self-evident*. And in what consists this *self-evidence* ? Manifestly in this, that no *Middle Term* can come between the notions of their Subject and Predicate ; which devolves finally into this, that the Subject and Predicate are the self-same notion, or that the Proposition is *Identical* : and this not onely *materially*, or found in the same Thing, for so are the Terms of every Remote Conclusion if it be True ; but *Formally* ; and this either simply in notion onely, as are the Definition and the Thing defin'd ; or else most formally and in expression also, as in those I alludg'd.

§. 4. Again, we experience that the most immediate notions, if they in the least differ, (such are, Proper Causes and Effects) can be connected with the Subject to which they belong in a Conclusion of a Syllogism, that is, they can be concluded, or admit of Proof : Wherefore, since 'tis a contradiction to say that the Prime Verities can admit Proof, their Terms must be *farthest* from having any *Middle Term* coming between them that is imaginable, that is, must be of the *self-same notion* ; and so they must be *Identical Propositions*. The former of these Discourses was put down by me (*Letter of Thanks* p. 10, 11, 12.) which one
would

would think it became a Logician to speak to. But my Adversary is of another metal, not the very same but near akin to *es sonans aut cymbalum tin- niens*: He never meddles willingly with Premisses or Proofs, but denies the Conclusion frontly, never acknowledging what was said in its behalf, and tinkles a little Rhetorick against it; which done, (who would think it?) immediately, as with some Charm, the Terms unconnect of themselves, and miraculously fly asunder; and though before it look'd like good honest Reason, yet by his giving it a *Disguise* instead of a *Confute*, 'tis turn'd perfect Nonsense. But to return to our Argument.

§. 5. Logick tells us moreover, that (whatever accidental considerations may enhance Opposi- tion) 'tis agreed by all that a Contradiction is for- mally and intrinsically the greatest or *First* of *Falshoods*; also that a Contradiction is An affirming and denying the same of the same according to all the same respects; wherefore the very *First Principles* being the *First* of *Truths*, ought to be diametri- cally opposite to Those, that is, an Affirming (or denying) the same of the same according to all the same respects, which is impossible to be express'd but by an Identical Proposition.

§. 6. Add that, since Contradiction is *Faulty*, and all Fault is a Privation of the opposite Good which it violates, it follows, that a Contradiction were innocent did it not violate some opposite Truth: Since then the Light of Nature teaches every Reflector that 'tis impossible to assign any Truth Opposite to a Contradiction but an Identical Proposition

Proposition, it follows that *First Truths* or *First Principles* must be *Identical Propositions*.

§. 7. To explain this better, we shall find by reflexion that two Contradictory Propositions are comprisable into *One* equivalent to both, whose Subject and Predicate contradict one another, as [*Peter here and now runs, Peter here and now runs not*] are necessarily equivalent to this, [*What here and now runs, here and now runs not.*] So likewise [*Scripture's Letter is a Rule, Scripture's Letter is not a Rule*] is equivalent to this [*Something which is a Rule, is not a Rule*] and so of the rest. By which 'tis easie to discern how clear a Truth it is, that *Identical Propositions* are the proper opposites to Contradictions, or the Truths they directly and immediately violate, and consequently *First Principles*: Since 'tis impossible mans wit rack'd to its utmost can invent any Opposite to [*What runs, runs not*] but [*What runs, runs*] or to [*What is a Rule, is not a Rule*] but [*What is a Rule, is a Rule.*] Lastly, The nature of Contradiction in common puts a thing to *be* and *not be* at once, and consequently puts this Proposition, [*What is not, is*] to which the onely opposite Truth is, [*What is, is*] which is therefore the *First Standard* of all Truth, and all other *First Principles*, as [*A Rule is a Rule, A Man a Man, &c.*] are but particulars subsuming under it, and partaking in the most perfect manner of its clearest Light.

§. 8. Farther, 'tis observable that the more remote the Terms of a Proposition are from Formal Identity, the less evident they are, and the
more

more proof they require ; as also that they still grow nearer and nearer to evidence, according to the degree of their approach toward the said Identity. Wherefore, since all Approach of distant things, if pursu'd, ends in a conjoyning and centering in the same, 'tis manifest that all distance in notion amongst Terms, ends in their being the same in notion, that is, in an Identical Proposition ; as also that such Propositions are for the reason given the most evident that may be ; and so in both regards the very First Principles.

§.9. Farther, All Propositions which are capable of *proof*, or all *Conclusions*, must have their Terms *materially* Identical ; that is, what corresponds to both their notions must be found in the same Thing, else they could not be True, nor capable to be proved: wherefore the Terms in First Principles must be *formally* such, nay the most formally that is possible ; but nothing is or can be more formally Identical than to have the Predicate and Subject every way the same ; such therefore the very First Principles ought necessarily to be.

§.10. There is also in Logick a way of arguing by bringing one to an Absurdity or Contradiction: And this is performed two manner of ways. One, by forcing the Defendant to contradict himself ; The other, by obliging him to contradict the nature of the Subject in question. The former of these is available as an Argument *ad hominem* ; but the latter attempt, if brought to effect, is a perfect Conquest: And why, but because it puts the

the Defendant to violate the nature of the Thing under debate ; that is, to thwart this First Principle, *The same is the same with it self*: for example, to make *Quantity not to be Quantity*, a *Rule not to be a Rule*, *Faith not to be Faith*, as shall be shewn hereafter more clearly, when we come to see the use of the First Principles in particular Instances.

§. 11. Moreover, if it be well examin'd, 'twill be found that all Efficiency and Passiveness, that is, all kind of Operation, is nothing but the *existence* of such a Nature exerting or (as it were,) *imprinting* it self upon the *subject* in which it works its Effect: For example, when a Brass Seal makes an Impression upon soft Wax, no account can be given of this Effect (abstracting from Motion which is caus'd by a Nature superiour to Body) but onely this, that the Agent is of such a degree of Density or Hardness, as, if mov'd or apply'd to that matter, is apt to alter the figure of its parts according to its own mould ; and the Patient of such a yielding nature in comparison of the other, as to receive its Impression ; and yet not to that degree Rare, as to lose it again by the Action of the common Causes in Nature, till some more particular Agent comes to efface it. 'Tis manifest then, that all Causality essentially depends on, and is finally resolv'd into this Truth, that *Things are such as they are, which is their being (in part) what they are*. All knowledge then of Cause and Effect, and consequently all Demonstration is ultimately refunded, that is, primarily built on those

those Propositions which express Things *being what they are*, that is, into Identical Ones.

§. 12. Lastly, He who is Essential Wisdom and Truth it self, has propos'd to us an Identical Proposition in those words [*I am what I am*] which is the First Increased Truth, as 'tis the first Created one, or the First Principle in discoursing about Creatures as to their Natures or Essences, that *Every Thing is what it is*; which is therefore True because God is what He is, or because *Self-existence is Self-existence*, as was explicated above, §. 1. & 2. which I hope Dr. T's Goodness will so much prevail above his Ignorance as not to judge *ridiculous*, whatever he thinks of the first Created Truths which immediately depend on the Other.

§. 13. But why must First Principles be necessarily express'd with that most perfectly-formal Identity? Or the Subject and Predicate be put in the self-same words? Is it not enough the *Sence* be the same, as is found in Definitions, but the *Words* must be the same also? Which bears a show of *ridiculousness*, and seems to admit of no possibility of advance towards new Knowledges? Why cannot then the Definition serve to principle all our Discourses about the Thing defin'd, without recurring to such Propositions as appear little better than flat and insignificant as to that purpose?

Answer: The Objection, in great part, demands what Use can be made of First Principles; which shall be spoken to in the next Discourse. But that Definitions are not the very Prime Verities

rities of all, appears evidently already ; because those Propositions which express the Things Possibility to be defin'd, must necessarily antecede the Definition.

And the same will be farther clear'd by these following Considerations.

1. That Definitions are often liable to dispute, but Identical Propositions never. I have heard a certain learned and ingenuous person disallow [*A Rational Creature*] to be a right definition of a *Man*, and discourse very soberly how proud a thing Mankind was, to arrogate all the Reason to himself, whereas diverse Birds and Beasts in their several spheres have as much or more Reason than He. And yet I dare say the same Gentleman would heartily allow the Truth of this Proposition [*A man is a man.*] Nay, indeed all the Scepticks in the world admit *Identical Propositions* to be True, yet the same men quarrel every Definition extant. Since then 'tis directly against the nature of the very first Principles to be *disputable*, 'tis evident that Definitions cannot be the very First Principles of all.

2. First Principles ought to be *Principia Intellectus* and naturally ingrafted in us, that so they may oblige all under forfeiture of their nature to acquiesce to their verity ; whereas Definitions are not such, but acquir'd by Practical self-evidence : For example ; by a long course of observation heedfully attending to the actions of men as men, and thence (by means of some First Principle evidencing so constant a hitting in so many particu-

lars to be beyond Chance or Accident) gathering his primary and proper Operation, we come to know the Definition of Man, none of which needs to know the Truth of this nature-taught Proposition, [*A Man is a Man*] or [*A Rational Creature is a Rational Creature.*] Moreover, Definitions generally need some skill of Art to make them, and all Art presupposes some First Principles; whence 'tis impossible Definitions should be the First Principles of all.

3. Experience teaches us that words being liable to Equivocation, where there are fewer words there is less room for Equivocating; wherefore since First Principles ought to be the clearest, and consequently the most unequivocal that can be imagin'd, Definitions, which explicate the notion in *more words*, afford more room for Equivocation, and consequently are even in this regard, less fit to be First Principles.

4. Lastly, Logical tricks of nicely distinguishing, sometimes elude the Truth of a Proposition, at least darken it; from which Inconveniences First Principles ought to be the most Free that may be: Now Definitions yielding more room for Equivocainess, do by consequence give more occasion of distinguishing; whereas *Identical Propositions* afford not the least: For example, this Proposition, [*A Man is a Rational Creature*] bears this distinction, *A man is rational in some things*, as in discoursing those notions that concern *Quantity*, but not in others, e. g. those which concern *Being*; or, Rational, that is capable to discourse
right

right the nature of some *Bodies*, but not of *Spirits*: Is it not evident hence that this Definition of *Man*, is by this means render'd in show ambiguous? And I wish there were not too many in the world who out of their ignorance of the true Method to Science, think this distinction both well-grounded and very pertinent. Now this being so, who sees not that the true limits of the definition of *Man*, become doubtful by such kind of distinctions, and consequently the sense of the Definition it self unknown; whereas nothing of this can possibly happen in that *Identical Proposition* [*A Man is a Man*] since whatever distinction affects the Predicate must also affect the Subject, and so the Proposition remains still intirely Identical, and perfectly true, and not in part onely, as it happens in the other.

'Tis concluded then from all imaginable considerations that can belong to this peculiar matter, that the very First Principles neither are nor can be any thing else but Identical Propositions.

§14. As for their seeming *ridiculous* to some persons; the reason is, because those men of mirth being led much by Fancy, and inur'd all their lives to pretty plausibilities, and seldom or never reflecting on or discoursing orderly from such Grounds, are hence apt to imagine that First Principles are Certain great Rarities or Productions of some extraordinary height of Wit; when therefore they come to hear *Identical Propositions* alledged for First Principles, seeing their high expectations so strangely disappointed, they hereupon grow

pleasant at the defeat of their Fancy ; never considering that, because First Principles ground all possible discourse of what nature soever, and therefore are common to all Mankind, even the rudest in the world, and inbred in them, they must therefore be the farthest from being the effect of Wit, and the most plain down right sayings that can be conceiv'd: Whence they are better learn'd from the Vulgar, than they are from great Scholars ; and therefore the most learned men that are, if they would go to work solidly, ought, in such things as are the Results of pure Natural Knowledge, attend to such as speak meer nature, rather than to those who mingle and perhaps corrupt it with airy speculations which have not that firm Basis to ground their Discourses. Now 'tis obvious to observe that the nature-instructed Vulgar are apt to deliver themselves in such kind of plain Speeches, in due occasions, and make use of them as Truths which fix their judgments in an Unalterableness. For example, if a man would force one of them to forgo what's very evident, he will stick firmly to the point, and tell you soberly, that *Truth is Truth*, or that *he's sure a Spade is a Spade*, or that *he knows what he knows* ; or, if it be in a point belonging to Justice, that, *Right is Right* ; and brings in these as Evidences from which he can never be driven : which signifies that such Truths as these are the Principles which naturally determin and fix him in an immovable adherence to the Point, as the ultimate resort and reason of his persuasion ; that is, they are to him First Principles,

cipling. 'Tis observable also that they are never more serious than when they are put to express themselves in this positive kind of blunt manner; nor would any By-stander (perhaps not Dr. T. himself, though he be the merriest man living when any talk is of Principles and Demonstrations) fall a laughing at them as ridiculous for their adhering finally to Identical Propositions: Which evidences that he has a conceit that First Principles are some fine elaborate Inventions of Wit, and that they are to tell a man something he knew not before; whereas they are such Truths as no man can possibly be ignorant of; as appears in those in *Euclid*, and other such-like, which seem at first blush full as ridiculous as those he so laughs at.

Lastly, 'Tis observable that those witty half-Speculators who scorn to follow Nature in their Grounds, when they come to lay any themselves, propose meer Whimsies for First Principles; of which Dr. T. is a pleasant Instance, as shall be seen hereafter.

DISCOURSE III.

That First Principles are Identical Propositions, proved by many Instances; and their Right Use shown.

§. 1. **T**HUS far we have discours'd the nature of First Principles from Logick and Metaphysick, within whose Confines that Matter was plac'd: Which no Intelligent Reader could expect to be less Speculatively deliver'd, considering the nature of that Subject: For common Reason tells any competent Judge in such affairs, that if any Sublunary Matter can require high Speculation, certainly a Discourse which states the nature of the Supreme Verities must forcib'y exact it. Wherefore to make it more intelligible, I shall for my Readers sake do three things: First instance in some particular Identical Propositions granted by all the World to be First Principles in their respective Sciences. Next, show the Use of these First Principles which my ignorant Adversary so miserably mistakes: And now and then, by the way, apply them to the present Controversie about Tradition.

§. 2. As for the First, I show'd Dr. T. (*Letter of Thanks*, p. 25.) an Example of one First Principle granted to be such by all who treat of the nature

ture of Quantity, though he, out of a constancy to his old humour, never heeds to take notice of it. 'Tis this, *A Whole is more than a Part* : Nor perhaps will so profound a man at superficial Talk deny this to be a First Principle, in regard the Subject and Predicate of that Proposition, by reason of the different manner of expressing (only which he minds not the Sence) seem disparate in their notion, and, so, not Identical or too closely connected, which he hath a most special Antipathy against in First Principles, as is seen by his impugning it in mine, and will more amply appear when he comes to put his own. Nay, the great difference in the *sounds* of the Subject and Predicate will make it to one who looks not much farther, to bear the face of a certain kind of distance and disagreement in sence between them, which will, no doubt, please him hugely. Yet I must contest that that Proposition is *Self-evident*, and that its Self-evidence consists in this, that its Subject and Predicate (consider'd Logically and not Grammatically) are perfectly Identical, that is, to Dr. T. are fully as Ridiculous as *A Rule is a Rule*, *Faith is Faith* : Which I thus shew. The Subject of that Proposition [*A Whole*] is defin'd to be *That which consists of Parts* ; or (since a Thing is that of which it *consists*) it's equivalent in sence is, in reality, [*A Whole is Parts*.] Now the word [*Parts*] being plural, necessarily and formally imports *more than one Part* ; wherefore this Proposition [*A Whole is more than a Part*] is perfectly the self same in sence with this, [*That which is more*

than one Part, is more than one Part :] which is directly Identical.

§. 3. Moreover, some late Philosophers build their Physicks on this Principle, *Corpus est quantum*, in which the Subject and Predicate differ indeed Grammatically, one being Substantively, the other Adjectively express'd; but if we rifle the words to clear the inward sense, (as is the duty of Scholars or Philosophers) we shall find that since all the Essential difference we know between a *Body* and a *Spirit*, is this, that this is *Indivisible*, the other *Divisible*; as also that *Quantity* and *Divisibility* is the same notion, it will appear evidently, that this Proposition [*Body is Quantitative*] is, according to them, perfectly equivalent in sense to this, [*What is Divisible is Divisible* :] which is manifestly Identical.

§. 4. Again, all the Learned World hitherto have held that we have Certain Maxims ingrafted in us by Nature, I mean imbuing our Mind by the first impressions on our Understanding, without our contributing to their generation in the least, more than by having an Intelligent Nature passively receiving those Impressions; and these they call *Principia Intellectus*, which generally concern the nature of *Being*; that Conception being the most Luminous, and by means of which striking the Eye of our Soul, all our Intellectual Sight is produc'd: as will appear to any one who attentively considers that all our Discourses consist of Judgments express'd by Propositions, and those essentially depend on the notion of *Being*; wherefore, unless this
be

be known antecedently, 'tis impossible either to judge, think or discourse. Hence follows that the First of our Knowledges is of the self-discovering nature or notion of *Being*; and the most obvious knowledge of *Being* is this, that it formally excludes, or is extreemly opposite to, *Not-Being*, and therefore inconsistent with it in the same Subject: which we use to express by this Proposition, [*Impossibile est idem esse & non esse*] 'Tis impossible the same thing should be and not be. This therefore hath ever been deservedly held a First Principle in Metaphysicks, establishing all our Discourses that concern the actual *Being* of Things, and grounding in a manner all Logick. And yet 'tis plain to the meanest Speculator, that this Proposition is the self-same in sence with this, *What is, is*: Which is most formally and supremely *Identical*: The impossibility mention'd in the former lighting onely on this, that actual *Being* and *Not-Being* should agree to the same Subject, or which is all one, that the Subject and Predicate in this later Proposition should not be connected.

§. 3. But, it may be the Principles of Mathematicks will better relish to our fastidious age, which neglecting to consider what 'tis that makes Geometry a Science, think there is no Demonstration but in Lines and Numbers. To them then let's go; and at first entrance into *Euclid* we are met with these famous and useful Principles. *Those which are Equal to the same, are Equal to one another. If Equals be added to Equals, the Wholes are Equal. If Equals be taken away from Equals, the Remainders*
are

are Equal. Those which are twice as big as the same, are Equal. Those which are Halfs of the same, are Equal. Besides others of the same strain; and amongst the rest, A Whole is greater than a Part of it self, of which we lately discours'd. Now I contend that all these are in effect Identical Propositions, and in the common sence of every Intelligent man, amount meerly to as much as this, *Aquale est, aquale sibi, An Equal is equal to it self*: or else suppose it necessarily as the very First Principle upon whose most evident Verity, theirs depends. For example, this Proposition, [*If Equals be added to Equals, the Wholes are Equal*] is clearly made up of the now mentioned Identical Proposition thrice (as it were) repeated; and is plainly as much as to say, The two suppos'd Equals are Equal to one another, the two Equals added are Equal to one another, and so the two Wholes made up of both those Equals, that is, the Equal Wholes are Equal to one another. And the same may be said of all the rest of that kind. Which were it not that men expect rigour of discourse in the Subject of Geometry, and have entertain'd a conceit that 'tis not to be expected nor had in other matters, would look full as Ridiculous by reason of their seemingly too great Plainness and Evidence, as a Rule is a Rule, or Faith is Faith.

§. 6 I come now to perform the second thing I promis'd, which is to show what use is to be made of First Principles, and how. In which hard point my Friend Dr. T. is at his wits end. And first he tells you soberly (Pref. p. 38.) if you will take his word,

word, that the mischief is, they are good for nothing; Which were, I confess, a mischief with a witness; for without these, no man living could either know, judge, or discourse.

§. 7. Next, he quotes *Aristotle* against me, as disliking a Proposition of the very same stamp with my First Principles; To which my answer is, (and I desire it may serve for his objecting all other mock-Authorities of this nature) that, though I value and honour *Aristotle* exceedingly, yet neither he nor any man living taken as a Reasoner, or in things which are the Proper Object of Humane Discourse, has any the least Authority over my Understanding, but by virtue of the Reasons he produces: Let him then make use of *Aristotles* Reasons (and the like I say of School-Divines) against me as much as he will; since those, if Convictive, may subdue my Understanding to assent, if I be Intelligent and Candid; or else expose me to the Disesteem of Learned men, if I be either so ignorant as not to understand their force, or so insincerely obstinate as not to admit them though I see they conclude: Otherwise, to neglect to alledge their Reasons, and think to combat and overthrow me by objecting their bare Sayings, is so senceless a conceit as onely could enter into the head of such a puny Logician. In a word, let him either prove this a necessary consequence, *Aristotle*, School-Divines, or other Discoursters, say such a thing, ergo, 'tis True; or else desist from such an insignificant method of confuting. Add, that he puts me, by his indistinct citing the place, to find out one half

half line perhaps in a large Treatise ; otherwise I should not doubt to show that Great Man not so opposite to my Doctrine as Dr. T. would persuade his Readers.

§. 8. After this he assures us that *by ten thousand* of these Identical Propositions, *a man shall not be able to advance one step in knowledge because they produce no Conclusion but themselves.* By which he gives us very learnedly to understand that he either never knew or else hath quite forgot that there ought to be two Premises to infer a Conclusion, and three Terms in every legitimate Syllogism, and not one Premise, and *one* or at most *two* Terms only. And lest you should think I abuse him in putting upon him such an absurdity as never *Junior Sophister* yet was guilty of, he pursues the acknowledgement of it home, and to convince me (forsooth) of the Foolery of these Principles, he will needs try what can be done with them either in a Categorical or Hypothetical Syllogism : thus ; *A Rule is a Rule, but Tradition is a Rule ; Ergo Tradition is a Rule.* Again, *If a Rule be a Rule, then a Rule is a Rule ; but a Rule is a Rule, Ergo.* And when he hath done, he asks if any man be the wiser for all this ? I answer, not a jot ; but I know a certain person much foolisher for it. Yet he says it may be *Mr. S. may make better work with them, and manage them more dextrously.* And truly I hope so too ; else he would deserve to be as ridiculous as himself that manag'd them so childishly. In the mean time 'tis observable what a Scholar-like way he takes to confute, and what a high conceit he has of his Jest. Was Drollery
ever

ever till now held a Convictive, or a Jeer a Demonstration? Alas poor Trifler!

§. 9. To make way towards the declaring the proper use of First Principles, I am first to remove Dr. T.'s misconceit, and to instruct his ignorance that the very First Principles or Identical Propositions cannot be the Premisses in any Syllogism. To do which he may please to know, or rather to reflect, that every Legitimate Syllogism has three distinct Terms; of which, the Proposition which is to be prov'd, or to be the Conclusion, affords us Two; the Third or Middle Term is to be sought for, and taken from the nature of the Subject in hand, or from what's intrinsically or (at least) necessarily connected with it, in case we would conclude the Thing *Certain*. This Middle Term (in that Figure which is the onely natural and proper one) joyn'd with the Predicate of that Proposition which was in question, or to be concluded, makes the *Major*; the same with the Subject of the said Proposition, makes the *Minor*. Whence is seen that each Proposition in a legitimate Syllogism has two Terms formally distinct that is two, which are not *formally* the same, or *Identical*: and consequently that the very First Principles can never be Premisses in an exact Syllogism, speaking, as he does, of those which are every way *Identical*.

§. 10. To show then their Proper Use, I explain my self thus. All solid Discourse concerning any Subject, ought to be grounded upon the nature of the Thing under debate, and to endeavour all what may be to hold firmly to that Nature: which if it does,

does, 'tis rightly made and Demonstrative; if not, 'tis absurd and Contradictory. Wherefore he who discourses right, guides himself all along by the Thing's being such, (that is, *by being what it is*) which is rooted in his Judgement, & keeps a steady eye upon that Point, lest in discourse he deviate and swerve from its nature: On the other side, he who discourses ill, violates the nature of the Thing, and runs into contradictory absurdities; and what means violating the nature of the Thing, or speaking contradiction, but the making the Thing *not be what it is*, and so falsifying by his discourse that Principle which was diametrically opposite in this circumstance to the Contradiction he sustain'd, which was that Things *being what it is*. For example, Dr. T. puts Scripture's Letter to be a Rule of Faith, and yet unless he will be strangely uncharitable, must grant (convinc'd by experience in the Socinians and others) that many *follow it to their power* and yet *judge not right* concerning what's True Faith, what not; which destroyes the nature of a Rule, or *makes a Rule not to be a Rule*, contrary to the very First Principle in that affair: For he puts it to be a Rule *ex suppositione*, and yet puts it to be *no Rule*, because the Followers of it to their power are misled, which argues (there being in this case no fault in Them) the want of a Regulative Virtue in It, and that 'tis *no Rule*.

§. 11. Hence is easily understood what use is to be made of the very First Principles: viz. not to make that which is the First Principle in such an affair one of the Premisses in a Syllogism, much less

to make that *one single* Identical Proposition both the Premisses (or *two* Propositions) as our shallow Logician in his wild rant of Drollery would persuade the Reader. But the very First Principles have a far more Sovereign Influence over the Discourse than any of those Particular Propositions, decisively (as it were) abetting or dis-approving the *Whole*. 'Tis therefore to stand fixt in the mind of the Discourser, and be heedfully attended to, so to give a steadiness to all his ratiocination. 'Tis its office to be the Test or Touchstone of Truth and Falshood, or a Rule which is a Measure of what's Right, what crooked, oblique, or deviating from true nature. If in Dispute one hold firmly to that, it authenticates his Discourse to be the solid Gold of Truth; If any plausible Talk make a mock-show of Connexion or Truth; it discovers the cheat, showing by its own most Evident Connexion the unconnectedness or looseness of the others empty Babble, and demonstrates it to be the meer Dross of Falshood, how fair soever it appear to the Eye at first, and how prettily soever it be superficially gilded with *sophisticate* Rhetorick or other artificial Tricks of counterfeit Truth. 'Tis like an immovable Basis, that sustains all the Superstructures of Truth; though it self rise not above its own firm level; or like a Rock, which by its rigid hardness, dashes asunder into Contradiction and Folly the incoherent and weak Productions of Witty Ignorance. No wonder then Dr. T. abuses so the First Principles as good for nothing, for he perceives them dispos'd to abuse him, by shewing all his Discourses

courses to be nothing but well-clad Nonsense; and though (his way of Discourse or his Cause not bearing it) he cannot work with them, yet if I be not much mistaken they will make work with him ere it be long. But, to return to our Instances.

§. 12. Faith, meaning by it a Believing upon Motives left by God in his Church, to light Mankind to his Truth, as I express my self in my Preface to Faith vindicated, and elsewhere, is an *Affent Impossible to be False*; and this is found in its Definition as its Difference essentially distinguishing it from *Opinion*, which is *possible to be False*, and is prov'd by more than forty Demonstrations in *Faith Vindicated*, not one of which has yet been in the least reply'd to: Wherefore, being a direct part of the Definition, it engages that First Verity on which the Definition it self is grounded, that is, if Faith be not Impossible to be False, *Faith is not Faith*: Wherefore Dr. T. who for all his shuffling makes Faith (thus understood) *possible to be False*, is convinc'd to clash with that self-evident Identical Proposition by making *Faith to be not Faith*; and, if the pretended Demonstrations in *Faith Vindicated*, or any of them stand, he and his Friend Dr. St. (if they truly say what they think) are as certainly concluded to be none of the Faithful, as 'tis that *Faith is Faith*.

§. 13. Also Tradition being a delivery of the Faith and Sence of immediate Forefathers to their Children, or to those of the next Age, by Living Voice and Practice, that is, by Catechising, Preaching, Conversing, Practising, and all the ways that
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can be possibly found in Education, it follows that if Mankind cannot express what they have in their thoughts to others at long run (as we use to say) so as to make Generality (at least the wisest) understand them, we have lost Mankind; since to do this, requires little more than Eyes, Ears, Power of Speaking and Common Sense: Wherefore let this way of Tradition be follow'd, and it will convey the first-taught Faith, or the Doctrine of the First Christians, that is, True Faith, to the end of the World: Therefore it hath in it all that belongs intrinsically to the *Rule of Faith*; that is, if men be not wanting to themselves, but follow it to their power, it will infallibly derive down the First, that is, Right Faith: Since then every thing is what it is, by its having *such a nature in it*, Tradition having in it the nature of a *Rule*, is indeed a *Rule*: Wherefore he who denies that Tradition has in it the nature of a *Rule*, denies by consequence that *Mankind is Mankind*; and he who denies It, having in it all that is requisite to the nature of a *Rule*, to be a *Rule*, denies by consequence a *Rule to be a Rule*.

S. 14 My last Instance showing withal more amply the Use of First Principles, shall be of that Identical Proposition which grounds the whole nature of Discourse: and 'tis this, [*The same is the same with it self*] Which is thus made use of.

The Copula [*is*] expresses the Identity or (as we may say) the sameness of the Subject and Predicate which it connects, and 'tis the aim of Reason to prove these two Terms identify'd in the

Conclusion, or (which is all one) that that Proposition we call the Conclusion is *True*. But how shall this be prov'd? A Third Term is sought for, which is the same with those Two others, and thence 't's evinc'd that those two are the same with one another in the Conclusion; and why? Because *otherwise that Third Term would not be the same with its own self, or be what it is*, if it were truly the same thing with two others, and yet those two were not the same thing with one another; but it would have Division in its very nature, or not be its self; being in that case distracted into more essential natures, (that is, being Chimerical, and consequently two Things) according to one of which, 'tis the same with one of those Terms; according to the other, the same with the other: Which being impossible, in regard every thing is precisely *what it is*, or *the same with its self*, it follows likewise that 'tis impossible that a Conclusion thus deduc'd should not be true; or, which is all one, that the Extreame of it should not be the self-same, as far as concerns verifying or justifying the Truth of the Propositions. For example, in this Syllogism:

Virtue is laudable.

Courtesie is a Virtue.

Therefore Courtesie is laudable.

The two first Propositions being true, and the Copula [*is*] expressing Identity of the Extreame,
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we see that *Laudable* and *Courtesie* must needs be the same with *Virtue*; wherefore also, either they must forcibly be the same in the Conclusion, or else *Virtue* must be not one but two; that is, must involve in its self two disagreeing natures, according to one of which 'tis the same with *Laudable*, and according to the other, with *Courtesie*; by which means *Courtesie* and *Laudable* become not the same in the Conclusion. But 'tis impossible *Virtue* should have Intrinsical Disagreement or Division within its own self, or not be the same with its own self; (or, which is all one, be not-it-self.) Wherefore 'tis Impossible those two Terms truly exprest to be the same with *Virtue* in the Premises, should not be the same with one another in the Conclusion; or, which is all one, 'tis impossible that the Conclusion should not be True.

§. 15. Hence is seen that the Light of Reason, or that Light by which we draw new Knowledges out of fore-going ones, is that very Light which shines in this self-evident Proposition, *The same is the same with it self*: Which would make one think verily this Identical Proposition were neither Ridiculous nor good for nothing; as also (which our Great Doctor will wonder at) that if the Terms be freed from ambiguity, and a Middle Term be rightly chosen, a man who understands Logick may come to be infallibly assur'd of his Conclusion; for the same reason a Mathematician may be infallibly certain that *omne Triangulum habet tres angulos aequales duobus rectis*; and upon this assurance given him by these *Ridiculous First Principles*,

ples, as our Ridiculous Logician calls them, grow so hard hearted in holding to his Conclusion thus demonstratively deduc'd, that he will not forego it, though two admirable *Undemonstrating DOCTORS OF NO PRINCIPLES*, Dr. St. and Dr. T. break Jest after Jest (which my Friend calls here *fair Admonitions*.) upon Principles, Demonstration, Rule, &c. and upon me for holding them; even so far as to make good Dr. T. quite *despair of convincing me*, as he here soberly and sadly complains to his Reader, Pref. p. 3.

§. 16. Lastly, Hence is seen in what way we make use of this First Principle, *The same is the same with it self*; and the like is to be said of others of this nature: to wit, thus; that, if the Discourse be so fram'd as necessarily to engage the Verity of that First Principle, it must most inevitably and infallibly be Certain and Demonstrative; but, if the Discourse clash with it and thwart it, 'tis as Certainly Contradictory, Absurd, and False.

§. 17. I foresee this First Principle now spoken of, which grounds all Reason, will even for that regard incur Dr. T's high dis-favour as well as its Fellows: (for a very small stock of Reason will serve to Set Up a Talking Divine, and too much will quite Break him) and therefore I have a great desire to reconcile them, by letting him see that himself through the goodness of Nature is forc'd to guide himself by those First Principles, though he strive all he can to pervert Nature, and slight them; nay, that himself must grant that Identical Propositions deserve to be call'd and esteem'd First Principles.

Principles, after all this ranting and swaggering noise against them. To do this, I will put them on his side, hoping his own Interest, Passion and Partiality, to which his Reason seems a sworn Slave, will invite him to see that Truth, which in other circumstances he was not capable of. In his *Rule of Faith*, p. 183, 184. he combates *Surf footing*, as making *Moral Motives and Arguments necessarily produce their Effect upon a free Agent, the Will of Man*; and argues pretty well against it (if he were not mistaken all the while) out of the nature of Man as *Free*: and, certainly, he must see 'tis his own best and closest play to contend that I subvert the nature of a Free Agent, as such, by my Discourse; and what means this, but that my Discourse makes that which is *Free* to be *Not-Free*: and is not this as plain'y to say that I wrong that Principle, *What's free is free*, as man can speak? If he say 'Tis not; I ask him what First Truth or Principle I wrong by making that which is *Free* to be *Not Free*? If I wrong no Principle, my Discourse would be unblameable; if any, the Wit of man can assign none but that Identical Proposition, *What's free is free*; this and onely this being formally oppos'd to that other in which he must contend my Discourse is faulty, namely, the sustaining that *What is free is not free*. Again, (as was said) a Contradiction is the Chief of Falsehoods, and being faulty in point of Truth, and all Fault or Defect being, as such, a Negative or Privative, its malice can onely be known by the Positive Good which it violates or excludes, that is,

in our case by the Opposite Truth which it destroys. But the proper Opposite to a Contradiction is an Identical Proposition, as hath been shown; also its proper Opposite (it being a Chief Falshood) is a Chief Truth or First Principle; therefore not onely all First Principles are Identical Propositions, but in case those were not establish'd first, Contradictions would be harmless innocent Fools, hurting no Truth or Principle in the World; and even though they be establish'd, Dr. T. tells us very seriously, *Pres. p. 38. They are good for nothing*; and so still he pleads for the Innocency of Contradictions, and disgraces their Enemies, First Princip'es; one would guess he hath far more of those on his side than of these; as it will appear when his Answer to *Sure footing* comes to be scann'd, and particularly in that passage I lately cited; where though it be the most plausible part of his Book, yet it shall be shown partly hereafter in this Treatise, partly more in the next, that he mistakes the natures of Necessity, Liberty, Will, and even Manhood; or else, when he haps to hit right, mis-applies his Objections to the wrong parts of my Discourse.

§. 18. If after all this, Dr. T. cannot conceive that The First Principles are Identical Propositions, let him imagine a man divested of the knowledge of all Identical Propositions, and then let him tell me how or in virtue of what such a man could either judge, know or discourse; or let him show me what could hinder such a Soul from taking direct Contradictions to be First Principles,
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and adhering to them as such? Since on the one side, they are of a large extent, as Principles use to be; and on the other side, he sees no Principle they are opposite to, and so ought to take them for Truths. When Dr. T. gives the World satisfaction in this point, I will follow his Nonsensical *Admonition*. and renounce all Principles as far as God and Nature will give me leave; for in that case Nonsense would be the best Sense, and Contradictions the perfectest Truths: But till he does this, he must remain in his *despair of convincing me*, I cannot for my heart help it.

§. 19. I shall adde one word more to the truly Learned Reader: Our imperfect manner of knowing in this state, obliges us to detail, or, as it were, divide the Object we would know into many abstracted, inadequate, or partial Conceptions, which we use to rank orderly in the ten Predicaments, and then to compound those single Conceptions into Propositions, and those into Discourses: Whereas separated Substances when they know any Object neither compound nor divide at all, but with one Intuitive View see the *Whole to be as it is*. Wherefore there is nothing in all our knowledges that in the manner of it comes so near their way of operating as our Act of knowing Identical Propositions. It divides as little as is possible for our state; for it predicates the Whole of the Whole; for which very reason it as little compounds again; and did not our Condition here forcibly exact of us to frame a Proposition, or connect together inadequate notions by a *Copula* when we would ex-

press a Truth, it would be a kind of Intuitive *seeing the Thing as it is*; and so indeed after a sort it is, but confused, (all Clearness here arising from a perfect distinguishing our notions) yet it resembles not a little in its absolute Evidence, immovable Firmness, and its nearest approach possible to Simple Intuition: Whence it hints to a Soul desirous of Truth, the glorious satisfaction it will enjoy, when the Screen of our Body is taken away, to have at one Prospect all the whole Creation and each single thing in it, presented to her ravish'd Understanding, and seen *to be what they are*, with a far greater Evidence, possess'd and held with an incomparably greater Firmness, and penetrated by a transcendently more excellent and Simple manner of knowing, than what we now experience here in those weak yet best resemblances, our knowledges of the First Principles. And indeed 'tis but fitting, that those supreme Knowledges, which ground both our Definitions, the *Matter*, and all force of consequence, the *Form* of our inferior way of Knowledge by Reasoning, should be nearest ally'd to the manner of Knowing proper to those Higher sort of Intellectual Creatures; that so, as the wisest order of the World requires, the *Supremum Infimi* may touch or immediately confine upon that which is *Infimum Supremi*.

§. 20. By this time I hope those Learned and Intelligent Persons to whom I address this Discourse, will discern I had some Reason to hold identical Propositions to be First Principles. I beseech them to review all Dr. T. hath said against them

them either here or in any other place; and when they have discover'd it all to be meer empty Drollery, they will justly wonder at his Confidence, that dare appear before Scholars in Print, and think to carry it off with soppyish Jest, as if his Readers had onely *Risibility* in them, and no *Rationality*. Yet in reliance on these unfailing Grounds, he ends with a *Declaration to all the World*, That if there be no other Principles but such as these, meaning Identical Propositions, he neither has any Principles, nor will have any. An excellent Resolution, and hard to keep! Yet I'll wager ten to one on his head that in despite of both Art and Nature he shall hold it as well as any man living: and that when he comes to lay any Principles of his own, the Terms shall be so far from Identical, that all the Wit of man shall not make them hang together at all.

§. 21. The Sum of this whole Discourse about Principles, is this: All Science *à Priori* is thus originiz'd. The First Being is what He is; that is, *Self-Existence is Self-Existence*, and so Essentially Unchangeable: Wherefore the Essences of Things depending solely on the Relation they have to what is in *in GOD*, that is, to what is *GOD*, are Unchangeable likewise, or are establish'd in their own Being, that is, *fixt* in their own particular and distinct Natures, which we fitly express by *Identical Propositions*, affirming them to be what they are. Hence they become capable of having the determinate bounds of their natures described in certain Forms of Speech call'd *Definitions*; which

which are nothing else but expressions of their Distinction from all other Things in the World. The way to make these Definitions is two-fold, One by collecting the natural Sayings of the Generality of Mankind about that thing as such, and then observing in what notion those several Sayings of theirs do center; the distinct Expression of which must needs be the Definition. For they knowing through Practical Self-evidence the distinction of one Thing from another by a perpetual converse with them, have the right notion or nature of the Thing in their Minds; and those Sayings genuinely deliver'd, are the Proper Effects of that Notion, imprinted there by the teaching of Nature. The other way is, by sorting all our Notions under certain distinct Heads, and then dividing the highest or most General Notion in such a Head, by intrinsecal differences, till by descending they light on that difference which constitutes, and (joyn'd with the *Genus* which it divides) defines that Nature. The Definition had, that is, a distinct Knowledge being gain'd of what 'tis in which any nature agrees with others, and in what it differs from them, Reason has more room to stir her self in, or more matter to work upon in order to bring things to a further distinction and clearness: And first, by a due consideration and reflexion, Practical Self-evidence still assisting, (for the Greatest *Men* of *Art* must not leave off being *Children* of *Nature*, nay perhaps 'tis their best Title) the Proper Causes and Effects of such a nature begin to appear; and thence Middle
Terms

Terms for Demonstrative Syllogisms disclose themselves, and Science begins to spread it self and advance. Or, if two Notions are to be shown connected, which seem'd remote, the Notions which directly compounded their Definitions are to be resolv'd farther, and their resolution pursu'd, till something appears in both of them which is formally Identical, that is, till some Identical Proposition comes to be engag'd. For example, if one would prove that *Virtue is Laudable*, he will find that *Laudable is deserving to be spoken well of*, and Practical Self-evidence as well as Reason telling us that, our *Speech* being fram'd naturally to express our *Thoughts*, that thing deserves to be *spoken well of*, which deserves to be *thought well of*; and that what's according to our *Right Nature*, or *True Reason*, deserves to be judg'd Right or Good, that is, *thought well of*; and withal, that *Virtue* is a Disposition to act according to *Right Reason*, it comes to appear that *Virtue* and *Laudable* have in the r Notions something that is *formally Identical*, and that this Proposition, [*Virtue is Laudable*] is as Certain as that *what's according to Right Reason* (or *Humane Nature*) *is according to Right Reason*: which seen, the thing is concluded, and all further disquisition surceases.

§. 22. This is my method which I observe to my power, whenever I profess to demonstrate: One-ly because we are not discoursing in severe Logical Form, I endeavour to engage at the very First Identical Propositions, or the First Principles, to avoid all possible cavil which uses to take occasion, from

from a Definitions being too large or too narrow, to confound and obscure the Discourse. Which being so, I challenge Dr. T. before our Peers, as he pretends to be held a Scholar and an honest man, to declare why in his *Preface*, p. 26. he tells his Readers, without any the least proof, that *Certainly, the sacred Names of Principles and Demonstration were never so profan'd by any man before.* Let him, I say, *state* the Natures of *Principles* and *Demonstration*, and then make out in what my way of discoursing wrongs either of them. This done, let him show what his has in it elevating it beyond meer superficial Talk. Till he does this, I accuse him of *Affected Ignorance* in Himself, and *Unjust Calumny* towards Me; and that he stands *hooping* (or, as himself elsewhere call'd it, *whooping*) aloof with Flams and Jeers, but dares not for his Credit come close to the Point: as judging it his Interest and Safety to avoid by all means the settling any Conclusive Method of Discoursing; lest his loose Drollery, which now is the onely Stickler, and domineers so briskly, come then to be quite out of countenance, and hang its head very forrily; being by that means discovered to be perfectly Insignificant, and good for just nothing at all.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE IV.

How Dr. T. advances to prove a Deity, by denying the absolute Certainty of all Sciences but Mathematicks.

§. 1. **W**E have seen how unfortunate Dr. T. has been in impugning my First Principles and Method of Discourling: It comes next to be examined how successful he is in settling his own. But ere I come close to that matter, I must say something to his Impertinent Drolleries, because he thinks them rare things, and (as appears by his carriage all along) places most of his confidence in those Trifles; nay, which in my mind is no very wise Project, he would have his Readers think those Feathers weighty, because they are gay. Besides, these are my onely Confuters, and so 'tis in a manner my duty not to neglect them.

§. 2. He challenges me, p. 4. to have threatened never to leave following on my blow, till I had either brought Dr. St. and Him to lay Principles that would bear the Test, or it was evident to all the World they had none. And I conceive I performed this in my Inferences at the end of Faith Vindicated, and had done more but for certain Reasons which I gave in

in my Preface. But this was no such great Threat : I knew them prone enough of their own *Genius* to do voluntarily things of this nature ; and now both of them have, like true Friends, conspir'd to do me that favour of their own accord. For Dr. T. declares here to no fewer than *all the World*, That he neither has any Principles, nor will have any, if there be no other but *Identical Propositions*, as, speaking of *First Principles*, I have prov'd there are not ; and Dr. Still. has laid such Principles of late, as would make any Understanding Man that reads them, swear he is as far from having any as his Friend. Excellent ones indeed he puts at first, but the mischief is, they make nothing at all for his purpose : Some fumbling Propositions there are that make for his purpose, but the ill luck is, they are so far from having the least semblance of Principles, that no wit of man shall ever make them look like good Conclusions : And to put it to the trial, if out of any Principle forelaid there, he can infer that *main* and in a manner *only* Point, viz. That *Scripture's Letter is the Rule of Faith*, and put it in a Conclusive Syllogism or two, I promise him upon the sight of it to become of his persuasion. But my Friend tells me here, he perceives *Great Minds are merciful, and do sometimes content themselves to Threaten, when they could Destroy* : and, in return I tell him, I am sorry to find by these words, that a certain Person not unknown to him, is far from having a GREAT MIND, who immediately upon the publishing my *Letter of thanks*, thought to destroy me without Threatning.

§. 3. I charg'd him formerly, and now charge him again, to *make the Rule of Christian Faith, and consequently Faith it self, to be False* ; Also I charg'd the same Position in equivalent Terms upon a Sermon of his, and that *as to the Chiefest and most Fundamental Point, the Tenet of a Deity* : and still am ready to maintain that Charge. But first 'tis observable that on this occasion my Friend is grown much out of humour, and from the merry conceited Vein of Wit and Drollery, falls into down-right Scolding : with—*He knew in his Conscience—he durst not cite, &c. —notorious falsehood —*—*groundless Calumny—he durst not refer to the place, &c. — This is the Man—it would make any other man sufficiently ashamed—He may blush to acknowledge, &c.* Why, what's the matter ? Surely there is something more than ordinary in the business, that makes a man of mirth, of late so pleasant, on a sudden thus pettish. He says *I durst not cite the words of his Book or Sermon* : How ! *Durst not !* I will not be so rude as to use Dr. T's words here, p. 35. Certainly one would think that this man has either no eyes, or no forehead ; but I must say that all who have Eyes may see, and all who have any degree of Sincerity will acknowledge that I did cite those words out of his Book in *Faith Vindicated*, p. 171. where I fastened that Position on Him, Dr. St. his Abetter, and their Adherents. And, as for the words of his Sermon, it was no Proper Place to cite or confute them there : It was enough there to add, as I did, after my Charge, these words, [*as may perhaps more particularly be*
shown

shown hereafter] relating to a future examination of intended in another Treatise. I use not to confute Books in Prefaces, as is the late mode of Answering: Witness Dr. Pierce against Mr. Cressy, the Dissuader against the Discovery, and Dr. T. here against three of mine; which, as his Friend says well, is like Rats gnawing the corners of Books, or (as Dr. T. himself expresses it here) *manfully nibbling*.

§. 4. But *I may blush* (he says) and what's the Crime? Why, to acknowledge that ever I have read my Lord Falkland, Mr. Chillingworth, and Doctor Stillingfleet, and have no better a style and way of reasoning; whom he praises for Persons of admirable strength and clearness in their Writings. What would he have? I freely confess, and ever did, that they are Persons of much Wit and a clear Expression; yet I never understood till now that men us'd to read their Books to learn a good style and methods of Discourfing. As for their admirable strength, I could never find it. The strength of a Discourse, as I imagine, consists in its Grounds, not in witty Plausibilities and fine Language: Though I know Dr. T. who seems never to have aim'd at any higher pitch, thinks verily such ingenious Knacks make a Discourse stronger than all the Principles in the world. And for them all put together, if Dr. T. can show me any one Principle in any of them, which they heartily stand to, able to put Christian Faith beyond Possibility of Falseness, I promise to yield all I have writ for false, and accordingly renounce it.

§ 5. As

§. 5. As for their *Clearness*, and Dr. T's too; whom I rank with them in that Quality, having really a disposition to do him all just honour he makes him'self capable to receive; I acknowledge 'tis found in them to a fair degree of Excellence. But I must distinguish *Clearness* into two sorts: one that *clears* their *own thoughts* by means of *Language*, the other that *clears* the *Truth* of the *Point* in dispute, which is done by means of *Principles*. The former makes the Reader understand *Them*, the latter makes him understand *Truth*. The one renders it *clear* that they *say thus*, the other makes it *clear* that they *say right* when they *say thus*. In the first sort of *Clearness* they have not many Fellows; In the latter, they are like other Mortals, or rather indeed they are quite destitute of it. For being utterly void of Grounds, they leave the Point *unseen* to be *true*, that is, *obscure*, and far from *Clear*. And if Dr. T. thinks I wrong them, I desire him to show me either in any of them, or in himself, any Principle he can justly call theirs or his, and then go to work Logically, and make out *how* and by virtue of *what* its Terms hang together; and if he can do this, I shall acknowledge publicly my *Erreur*, and make them all honourable satisfaction the very next Piece I print. In a word, they are pretty dextrous at *pul-ling down*, or bringing all things to Incertainty, as becomes Men of Wit and Fancy; (and what easier than to raise a thousand wild Objections at rovers, without ever heeding the natures of the Things?) but at *Building*, which requires a *Judg-*
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ment made steady by Grounds and Principles, they ever did, and ever will, and so must all who follow their steps, fall infinitely short.

§. 6. As for my *style*; I declare that I regard it no further than it serves to express my thoughts; especially not intending to persuade the Vulgar Rhetorically by advantage of Language, but to prove severely the point to Scholars by the connectedness of my Sence. I am of St. *Austin's* mind, that, in this circumstance, an Iron-Key is as good as a Golden one, where no more is requisite, but *aperire quod clausum erat*, to open what was before conceal'd or shut. In my younger years and spring time of my life, I apply'd my self much to those flourishes of Poetry and Rhetorick; but I am now in my Autumn; and my riper thoughts applying themselves to study Knowledge, the Flowers fell off, when the Fruit-time was come. I endeavour, as far as I am able, to fill my mind with grounded and solid Reasons for the point in hand, and then let my Sence give me my *Style*, and not frame my Sence to my *Words*, or make my *Words* supply the want of Sence, as gay Discourfers use. Besides, no mans Attention is infinite; and so, should I mind my *Style* too much, in all likelihood I should mind Sence (which I a thousand times more value) less; and I take this to be one Reason why Dr. T. (for otherwise the man has a very good wit) heeding his *Style* and *Words* so extreemly much, scarce attends at all to his Sence; or, (as an Ingenious Person reading this Preface expressed it) *had rather be guilty of ten Errors than one*
Incongruity.

Incongruity. Lastly, how does Dr. T. know my *Style*, were I to make a Sermon? Does not every Orator know that the *Style* due to a Sermon and a strict Discourse of close Reason, are the most different imaginable? I will not say Dr. T. has no good Judgment in Words, for this would make him good for little; but I must say he was very rash in concluding absolutely of my *Style* from seeing it in *one* kind of matter onely, and this the most Incompetent of any in the world, to show what Language one is Master of.

Now to his Sermon; and let him remember 'tis himself forces me to lay open the weakness of his Discourses by his frequent and scornful Provocations: Which I was very loth to do in this Circumstance, lest it might wrong the Common Cause of Christianity against Atheism. But I consider'd that, should Christian Divines acquiesce and seem to consent by their Carriage that they judge such quivering Grounds competent to build their Faith and the Tenet of a Deity upon, it would be a far juster Scandal to Atheists, than 'tis to disclaim from them, and avow in the name of the rest the absolute Certainty of those Maxims which ground our Persuasions as Christians. Add, that it was my Duty to those who yet are firmly persuaded of their Faith, not to permit them to slide into a less hearty Conceit of it than the nature of Faith and the Obligations springing from it, do require at their hands. These Considerations justifying me fully to the World, and Dr. T's daring Provocations particularly to his Friends, I resolv'd

to answer his Challenge; though I foresee my Discovering the Weakness of his Discourses upon this Subject, engages me to make better of my own in confutation of that Irreligious Sect, of which I here acknowledge my self a Debtor to my Readers, and shall perform that Obligation, as soon as I have done with those Pretenders to Christianity who make Faith and its Grounds Uncertain. *inward* Ulcers are far more dangerous, and require speedier cure than those which are *without*.

§. 7. His intent in his First Sermon was to show the Unreasonableness of ATHEISM upon this account, because it requires more Evidence for Things than they are capable of. But let us Christians take heed that we give not scandal to Atheists, and obstruct their Conversion by exacting of them what is opposite to the true Nature God has given them, or Right Reason, and requiring of them Impossibilities. And for this end, let us impartially consider what 'tis we invite and perswade them to, viz. to Assent to the Existence of a Deity, and other Points of Faith, as Certain Truths, may lay down their Ives, upon occasion, to Attest they are *such*. And what is it to Assent? 'Tis to say interiorly, or judge verily that the thing is so. And can a Motive or Reason possible to be False, ever induce in true Reason such an Obligation, or work rationally such an Effect? How should it be? Since in that case a man must on the one side judge the thing *Impossible to be False*, because he is to assent to it as a Truth; and yet must at the same time necessarily judge it *Possible to be False*, because he

sees the Motives he has offer'd him raise it no higher: that is, he must hold both sides of the Contradiction, which is absolutely impossible. Now *true Evidence* that the thing is so, takes away all possibility of Falsehood, and so obliges to Assent; and if Dr. T. produces such proofs as make the point *truly Evident*, an Atheist is unreasonable and obstinate if he do not Assent to it: But, if by those words, *Atheism is unreasonable because it requires more Evidence than the things are capable of*, he means that the Things afford no true Evidence at all, and judges Atheists unreasonable for not assenting without true Evidence because the Things afford none, he in effect tells them they must forfeit their *Manhood* ere they can be *Christians*; than which, nothing can more reflect on the Profession of Christianity, or be more unworthy a Christian Divine to propose. Let us see how far Dr. T. is blameable in this Particular. He discourses thus; and since he so earnestly presses it, we will take his words in order.

§. 8. *Aristotle* (says he) *bath long since observed how unreasonable 'tis to expect the same kind of Proof for every thing which we have for some things.* *Aristotle* said very well. For, speaking of Proofs in common and at large, those we have for Success in our *Exterieur Actions*, on the *Hopes* of which we proceed to Act, are for the most Part but *Probable*; but this reaches not our present business about a Deity, (in order to which this Preamble is fram'd) where *Exterieur Acting* will not serve the turn, but an *Interiour Act* of Assenting to the Existence

of such a Sovereign Being is necessarily requir'd ; The Question then is, Whether *Aristotle* did or could with any reason say that a *Rational* Creature (that is, a Creature whose nature 'tis to deduce Conclusions by *Discourse* from *Premisses*, or build the certain Truth of *Those*, upon the certain Truth of *These*) could be oblig'd, in true Reason, or acting according to Right Nature, to assent, judge or conclude a Thing *True*, without such Motives or Proofs which did conclude it *True*; or that, what concluded a Thing *True*, did not also conclude it impossible to be otherwise, or to be False. 'Tis granted then that in our *Exterior* Operations, exercised upon Particulars where Contingency rules, we must rest contented with Probabilities of the Event, and proceed to act upon them, the necessity of acting obliging us; for, should all the world surcease from Action till they were assur'd of the good success of it, all Commerce and Negotiation must be left off, nay all the means of *Living* must be laid aside; but then we are not bound to assent or judge absolutely that the thing will succeed well, because we have no Certain Grounds or Conclusive Reasons for it, but onely that 'tis best to act, though upon Uncertain Grounds of the Success, for which assent also we have absolute Evidence from the Necessity of acting now spoken of. Whereas, on the other side, where the whole business of our Christian Life, (which, as such, is spiritual) is to worship God in Spirit and Truth, or approach to him by ascending from *Virtue* to *Virtue*, that is, from *Faith* to *Hope*, from *Hope* to *Charity*,

rity, the Top of all Perfection; the whole interior Fabrick is built on a Firm Assent to the Truth of the Points which ground our Profession. Wherefore, if the *Foundation* for this Assent be not well laid, all the *Superstructures* of Religion are ruinous. Now Nature having fram'd things so, and the Maxims of our Understanding giving it, that those who guide themselves by perfect Reason, that is, the strongest and wisest Souls, are unapt to assent but upon Evidence, (whereas the weaker sort (as experience teaches us) are apt to assent upon any silly Probability) hence unless such men see Proofs absolutely concluding those points *True*, they are unapt to be drawn to yield to them, and embrace them as Certain Truths; especially, there being no necessity at all to assent as there was to *act outwardly*, in regard Nature has furnish'd us with a Faculty of *Suspending*, which nothing can subdue rationally (in such men at least) but *True Evidence* had from the *Object*, working this clear sight in them either by it self, or else by *Effects* or *Causes* necessarily connected with It. Other Evidences I know none. It may be Dr. T. does. Let us see.

§.8. *Mathematical things* (says he) *being of an abstracted nature, are onely capable of clear Demonstration: But Conclusions in Natural Philosophy are to be proved by a sufficient Induction of Experiments: Things of a Moral Nature by Moral Arguments, and matters of Fact by Credible Testimony. And though none of these be strict Demonstration, yet have we an Undoubted Assurance of them, when they are proved*

by the best Arguments that the nature and quality of the thing will bear. This Discourse deserves deep Consideration. And first it would be askt why Metaphysicks are omitted here, which of all others ought to have been mentioned, and that in the first place, since its proper Subject is those Notions which concern *Being*, and to give *Being* or *Create*, is the Proper Effect of Him who is Essential Being; whence it seems the Properest Science that is to demonstrate a Deity, in case Metaphysical things be demonstrable; and that they are such, Dr. T. himself cannot deny; for if (as he says here) things are therefore demonstrable because they are of an abstracted nature, the Object of Metaphysicks, which is *Being*, is far more abstracted from matter and so from *Motion*, and its necessary Concomitant *Uncertainty* or *Contingency*, than is *Quantity*, the subject of Mathematicks; for this primary Affection of Body is the Ground and Proper Cause of all Variation and Unsteadiness, since all natural *Motion* or *Mutation* arises from *Divisibility*: Yet, because all Science is taken from the Things as standing under our notion or Conception, and not according as they exist in themselves, where thousands of Considerabilities are confusedly jumbled into one Common Stock of Existence or one *Thing*; also because we can abstract By our Consideration the notion or nature of *Quantity*, nay consider the same *Quantity* meerly as affecting Body, as it were, *steadily*, or *extending* it, without considering the same *Quantity* as the Proper Cause or Source of *Motion*; hence the

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Mathematicks have Title to be truly and properly a *Science* ; for this Abstraction, or manner of being in our mind, frees the notion or nature thus abstracted (that is, the thing, as thus conceiv'd by us) from *Uncertainty*, nay indeed fixes it in a kind of *Immutability* ; whereas were it consider'd as found in the World, there would be no firm Ground at all for any Discourse. For example, perhaps by reason of the perpetual turmoil of things in Nature, there is not to be found in the World any one Body either mathematically Straight, Circular, or Triangular ; yet because the nature of Body conceiv'd as in *Rest* bears it, & we can abstract from Motion, and so consider quantitative Things according to what they can bear in themselves, taken as *not moving*, or in *Rest*, therefore we can make such steady notions, and when we have done discourse them, and ground a long train of new Conclusions (which we call a particular Science) upon such a Nature thus conceiv'd.

§. 9. And for that reason I would gladly know why *Ethicks* or *Morality* is not equally demonstrable as Mathematicks. For we can equally abstract those *Moral* Notions of *Virtues* and *Vices*, and consider them apart, as we can do those *Mathematical* ones of *Lines* and *Numbers*. I know 'tis grown a common humour in the World, taken up I know not how, by course, and continu'd none knows why, to think otherwise : But I must confess I never could discern any reason for it, and shall be thankful to that man who can show me any that convinces. In the mean time I give mine for the
Affirma-

Affirmative; which is this, That the same reason holds for Ethicks as for Mathematicks, since all the perquisites for Demonstration are found in the one as in the other. To put it to the Test, let's consider what *Euclid* does when he demonstrates, and by virtue of what: We see he puts his Definitions and some common Maxims peculiar to that Subject, and then by his Reason connecting the first Deductions with his Principles, and the following Deductions with the foregoing ones, weaves them into a Science. And is it not evident that we can as well know what's meant by those words which express *Virtues* and *Vices*, and so as well define them as we can those other? Also that the Common Maxims of Morality are as self-evident to Humane Nature as any First Principles in the World? I admire then what should hinder Ethicks to be as perfect a Science as the clearest piece of Mathematicks, since we can equally abstract the several notions handled in it from matter, equally define them, and, consequently, assisted by Common Maxims equally-evident, with equal clearness discourse them; which is all that is requir'd.

§. 10. If it be said that particular Moral Actions are liable to Contingency; 'tis answer'd that this hinders not but the Speculative part of Morality is a true Science: Even Mathematical Demonstrations, when reduc'd to practice, and put in matter, are subject also to Contingency, as we experience daily in Mechanicks: and yet the Speculative part, which abstracts from matter, is never the less Scientificall.

§. 11. The greatest difficulty is in that Cardinal Virtue call'd *Prudence*; and I confess that because the exercise of this Virtue is surrounded with an incomprehensible number of Accidents, and way-laid, as it were, with all the Ambushes and Stratagems of Fortune; and consequently to make its Success Certain, we must be put to fathom the natures of many several things; nay more, their Combinations or Joynt-actings with their several circumstances; and especially of those things which are the Common Causes of the World, as the influences of the Sun, Moon, and other Stars, (if they have any that is considerable) and lastly of the Elements which 'tis impossible for our short-sighted Knowledge to reach; hence *Prudence*, in its Execution, or put in matter, is liable to more Contingency by far than any piece of the *Mathematicks*, where we have but one or two single notions or natures to grapple with and weild; Yet notwithstanding all these difficulties, I must still contest that the Maxims of *Prudence*, upon which its *Dictamens* are chiefly grounded, are self-evident practically, and to the Learned Demonstrable, viz. That we ought to sow and plant in their proper seasons, that 'tis best for Merchants to hazard though they be insecure of the Event, and a thousand such-like.

§. 12. I expect Dr. T. will object the fickle nature of the *Will*, which renders all Contingent where this perpetually-changing Planet has any Influence. But yet there's a way, for all that, to fix this volatil *Mercurial Power*, and make it act with

a *constancy* as great as any other thing in *Nature*. To conceive how this may be effected, we are to consider that the *Will* too has a peculiar *nature* of its own, which it can no more forgo than the most constant Piece found in *Nature* can do Its: that is, The *Will* can no more leave off being a *Will*, than a *Rule* can not-be a *Rule*, *Faith* not-be *Faith*, or any other of those *ridiculous* Identical Propositions (as Dr. T. calls them) not be true. Now the *Will* being a *Power*, and *Powers* taking their several *Natures* from their *Objects*, or, as the *Schools* express it, being *specify'd* by them, and the *Object* of the *Will* as distinguish'd from the *Understanding*, being *Good*, and this propos'd to It by that *Knowing Power*; that is, *Good*, (at least) *appearing* such; if it can be made evident that such a thing can never *appear* a *Good* to the *Subject* thus circumstanc'd, 'tis demonstrable the *Will* cannot will it, nay as evident as 'tis that *A Will is a Will*.

§. 13. To apply this to particulars: In case there be a *Trade* or *Profession* of *Merchants*, and it be evident to all the *Followers* of that sole *Employment*, that *Themselves*, *Wives* and *Children* must starve unless they venture to *Sea*, the not-venturing can never appear to them (thus circumstanc'd, that is, addicted to that onely way of *Livelihood*, as is suppos'd) a *Good*; and so 'tis demonstrable that (abstracting from *Madness* or *Exorbitant Passion*, which is not our *Case*) they can never *will* not-to-venture. Or if a great multitude of men have embrac'd no *Profession* but that of
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the Law, and, as we'll suppose, have no other Livelihood but *That*, so that it becomes evident it can never appear a *Good* to them not to take Fees; 'tis as Certain they will not refuse them, as 'tis that a Thing is it Self, or that a *Will is a Will*; because a Will is a Power whose Essence 'tis to have such an Object as *is appearingly Good*.

§. 14. To come closer to our purpose. Suppose Innumerable multitudes of Fathers or Immediate Predecessors in any Age had an inclination to deceive their Children or immediate Successors in the World, and consequently that the Immediate End they propos'd to themselves were to make them believe such Points of Faith were received by them from Forefathers, which were indeed *newly invented*; these men, I say, in case they must see it impossible to compass that end, viz. to deceive the under-growing World in so open a matter of Fact, it follows that (*End, Motive, and Good* being the self-same thing in our case) it must necessarily appear to them *no Good*, or want all power of moving them, since a *seen Impossibility* can never be a *Motive* to one not Frantick: Wherefore 'tis as Certain they cannot conspire to *will* effectually in that circumstance, nor consequently to *do* such an Action, as 'tis that the *Will* cannot will any thing but an *appearing Good*, that is, as evident as 'tis that the *Will is it self*. And this is the true force of my Argument as to that part of my proof, (*Sure footing* p. 78.) however Dr. T. is pleas'd perpetually to disguise it, that it may better become his necessary Drollery.

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How then ? Is not the Will *Free* ? I reply, It is not free in this, nor is it at the Will's pleasure to chuse whether it will *be its self* or no : Whenever therefore its *Essence* is engag'd, those Acts are not Free ; In all other Cases where its *Essence* is *not* engag'd, 'tis Free, provided there be on the Objects side variety enough for *Choice*. Yet in those former Cases those Acts of the Will are *voluntary*, because they are *Hers* ; and *more voluntary*, because they are *more* according to what's *Essential* to her, or to her very Nature.

§. 15. As for *Natural Conclusions being prov'd by a sufficient Induction of Experiments*, I must absolutely deny any Induction to be sufficient to beget new Science, if it be understood of Experiments alone, without the assistance of Common Maxims in that affair. And I would gladly be inform'd why *Physicks* or *Natural Philosophy* should be debarr'd the power of deducing its Conclusions Scientifically, or, why the same reason holds not for its being a Science, as does for the Mathematicks and Morality. We can arrive to know the meanings of those words which express Natural Notions, as *Heat*, *Cold*, *Moisture*, *Dryness*, &c. Again, the Common Maxims belonging to *Nature* are full as Evident as any in the Mathematicks or Morals ; as that a *Dense* or less *Divisible* Body prest against a *more Divisible* (or *Rare*) one will divide it, and such like. We can consider too those Natural Notions abstractedly ; and, so, define them, and discourse them evidently, thus abstracted ; which is all that is requisite to a Science.

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It would be well consider'd then why we ought to relinquish that Method, which is, confessedly, the road way to all Science in the Mathematicks, and take up, instead of it, this new and Contingent Way of Induction. The Objections against this Discourse are the same which are made against Morality's being a Science, to which I have lately spoken. But Dr. T. is pardonable in this mistake, because he errs with a great multitude, and those too very ingenious persons; who, unfortunately missing the Right Method to Science, and having taken a prejudice against all Beginning *a priori* by way of Principles, conceit *Natural Knowledge* onely attainable by amassing together great multitudes of *Experiments*. And as they who pursue that fruitless study of the Philosophers Stone, light upon many pretty things by the way which entertain and please their Fancies, and, by that means, decoy them forwards to spend their Thoughts, their Money and Industry to little purpose: So they who solely affect this Way of Experiments, hit upon many pleasant and delightful Productions, useful indeed to some degree for Practical Men or Artificers; but full as barren to create any new Science, as the other to make Gold. Whence, though I dare not be so bold as to suggest my Advice, yet I crave leave humbly to express my Wish, That those Excellent Wits would think fit maturely to consider in the first place whether they be secure of their Method; which will be best determin'd by looking into the nature of *Humane Discourse* when rightly made; and dis-

discovering by what means 'tis effected when we conclude evidently some new Truth in the Mathematicks, or any other Science, and then considering whether meer Induction have any such virtue. The Zeal I have that the precious Thoughts and diligent Industry of such Ingenious Pursuers of Truth should not miss their End, transports me a little unseasonably, and perhaps needlessly, beyond my present Duty; for which yet I know their Candour such, that I shall easily obtain their pardon.

§. 16. It follows in Dr. T. *Matters of Fact are to be proved by Credible Testimony.* But what I desire to know is, whether any Testimony is to be held *Credible* for any thing, unless it either be, or at least be held, *hic & nunc*, *INFALLIBLE* in that affair: For *Credible* signifies [*to be believed*] and *Belief* is a yielding over the Understanding to assent upon Authority, and all Assent is a saying interiorly the Thing *is*: Now that any man can according to Maxims of True Reason say interiorly, that is, judge or hold the Thing *is*, and yet at the same time judge that the Persons on whose sole Authority that Assent is built, are *hic & nunc* Fallible, that is, may perhaps be actually deceiv'd, and consequently that the Thing itself is *possible not to be*, is directly to judge that a Thing may at once *be*, (since he assents it *is*) and yet possibly *not be*, because the Authority upon which its *being* so as to my knowledge solely depends, may possibly be in an Error, or deceiv'd actually in that very particular.

Again,

§.17. Again, by these words [*Matters of Fact are to be prov'd by Credible Testimony*] I suppose he means [*prov'd True*] or, which is all one, *Impossible to be False* : Now I would gladly know of Dr. T. whether a Testimony *possible to be deceiv'd*, or Fallible *hic & nunc* in such a business, is able to prove that that very matter built onely on such a Testimony, is *Impossible to be False*. But if he means that matters of Fact are not provable to be True, but onely to be Probable or Likely-to-be True; then 'tis the *Probability* of those matters which is concluded to be True, and not those matters themselves.

§.18. I wish I could see an Answer in a sober and candid Way to this or any such Argument. The best I have had yet is given here (p. 16.) in these words, *All Humane Testimony is Fallible for this plain Reason, because all men are Fallible*. Good God! Is it possible there should be found among Mankind a Writer so weak, as to put that for a plain Reason which is so plainly contrary to common Sense? Is it so plain that all Mankind may be deceiv'd in their Sensations, on which kind of Knowledge Authority or Testimony is built? May all the World be deceiv'd in judging whether the Sun shin'd or no yesterday, or that themselves live in such Towns, converse with Acquaintance, or lastly that they live; since they may be equally deceiv'd in their Experience of this, as in their daily Sensations of familiar Objects? Yet Dr. T. hopes by virtue of the plain Evidence of this one Paradox to overthrow the Certainty of Tradition;

may the Certainty of all Natural Sciences to boot; for these according to him are solely built upon Induction, which depends on Sensations; and These if we may trust him, are all possible to be deceiv'd.

§. 19. And is not Faith it self by these Grounds left in the same pickle? Its Rule, whether it be *Tradition* or *Scriptures Letter*, evidently depends upon *Humane Authority*; and this, says he, is all *Fallible*, and what's built on a *Fallible Authority*, (says Common Sense) may *possibly* be an *Errour*, or *False*; therefore 'tis most unavoidable from his Principles that all Faith may *Possibly be False*; however the shame of owning so *Unchristian* and half-*Atheistical* a *Tenet*, makes him very *stiff* and angrily deny the Conclusion; but he shall never show why 'tis not a most necessary and genuine Consequence from his Position of all *Humane Authority* being *Fallible*. I expect that instead of a direct Answer to the force of my Argument, he will tinker a little Rhetorick against my Conclusion, or start aside to a *Logical Possibility* that men may be deceiv'd, and affirm that 'tis not a *Contradiction in Terms*, and so may be effected by the *Divine Omnipotence*. But that's not our point: We are discoursing what will follow out of the ordinary Course of Causes; the Conduct of which, is the work of the Worlds all-wise Governour; whence, if those Portions of Nature or Mankind cannot be deceiv'd without *Miracle*, and 'tis most unbecoming GOD to do a *Miracle* which reaches in a manner a whole *Species*, as that

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no Fire in the World should burn, no Water wet; especially if it be most absurd to conceive that GOD the Author of all Truth, nay Essential Truth it self, should do such a stupendious and never-yet-heard-of Miracle to lead Men into Error, as is our case; 'tis most manifestly consequent it cannot be effected at all, that Mankind should be Fallible in Knowledges built on their constant Sensations.

§. 20. It follows. *And, though none of these be strict Demonstration, yet have we an undoubted Assurance of them when they are prov'd by the best Arguments that the nature and quality of the Thing will bear. To this we will speak when we come to examine his Firm Principle. He proceeds. None can demonstrate to me that there is such an Island in America as Jamaica; yet upon the Testimony of credible Persons, and Authors who have writ of it, I am as free from all doubt concerning it, as from doubting of the clearest Mathematical Demonstration. True; none can demonstrate there is either Jamaica or any such Place; Yet I see not why they may not demonstrate the Knowledge of the Attesters from the Visibility of the Object, and their Veracity from the Impossibility they should all conspire to act or say so, without some appearing Good for their Object, or intend to deceive in such a matter, and so circumstanc'd, when 'tis evidently Impossible they should compass their intended end. As for his affirming that he is as free from all doubt concerning it, as he is from doubting of the clearest Mathematical Demonstration; I answer, that a*

that may be *free from doubt*, yet not
hold the Thing *True*, as shall presently be
shown: And, if Dr. T. please to look into his
own Thoughts, he shall find instill'd through the
goodness of Nature, by *Practical Self-evidence*,
more than a bare *freedom from doubt*, viz. such a
firm Assent & Adherence to it as a Certain Truth,
that he would deem him a Madman or a Deserter
of Humane Nature, who could doubt of it and in
a word, as firm an Assent as to any Mathematical
Demonstration; which why he should according
to Maxims of right Reason have, unless he had
a Demonstration of it, or at least saw it by *Practical Self-evidence* impossible that Authority
should *hic & nunc* be deceiv'd, or conspire to de-
ceive, and so held the Authority Infallible as to
this point, I expect his Logick should inform me.

§.21. We are now come to take a View of Dr. T's
performances hitherto. He hath omitted the proper
Science for his purpose, *Metaphysics*, (I suppose
because it sometimes uses those hard words, *Poten-
tiality* and *Actuality*, which his delicate Ears cannot
brook) and has secluded *Morality*, *Physicks*, and
the Knowledge we have of the Nature which
grounds all Humane Authority and Christian
Faith, from being Sciences, allowing it onely to
the *Mathematicks*; which would make one verily
think the VWorld were perversly order'd, and od-
ly disproportion'd to the nature and good of Man-
kind, for which we Christians agree it was created;
that greater Evidence and Certainty (and conse-
quently *Power to act aright*) should be found in
those

those things which are of far less import, than in those which are of a Concern incomparably higher. Yet it matters less (some may think) as long as we are not bound to *assent* to any of those Conclusions in those respectve Subjects, the absolute Certainty of which, Dr. T's Discourse calls into question, or rather denies, whence, it we have in these, and such as these, knowledge enough to determine us to act Exteriorly, it may seem to suffice. But now, when We come to FAITH, where We are *Oblig'd* to *Assent*, or to *hold* Firmly, and verily *judge* the thing True, and where Exterior Acting will not do the Work, or carry a Soul to Bliss, but Interior Acts of a Firm Faith, a Vigorous Hope built on that Faith, and an Ardent and Over-powering Love of Unseen Goods springing out of both These, are Absolutely Necessary to Fit Us for an Union with our Infinitely-Blissful Object; and the Strength of all These, is Fundamentally built on the SECURENESS of the Ground of Faith. In this Case, I say, a Rational Considerer would think it very requisite that the Reasons of so Hearty an Assent (but especially for that most Fundamental Point of the Existence of a Deity, it being of an infinitely-higher nature and import) should be full as Evident as the most Evident of those Inferiour Concerns, and in comparison Trifling Curiosities. And not that the World should be manag'd on such a fashion as if Mankin

were onely made to study Mathematicks; since absolute Evidence, his best natural Perfection, is according to Dr. T. onely found in These. Whence we see that Mathematicians are infinitely beholding to him, but Philosophers not at all, and I fear, Christians, as little. Now these two points are, according to my way of discoursing, for this very reason taken from the End and Use of Faith, and the Obligation lying on us to hold and profess it *True, Self-evident Practically* to the Generality of the Vulgar, and *demonstrable* to the Learned; Let us see what strong Grounds of such an immovably-firm Assent Dr. T. will afford the World for that first and most Fundamental Point of all Religion, the Tenet of a Deity; of which if we cannot be assur'd, all else that belongs to Faith is not worth heeding.

DISCOURSE V.

Dr. T's Firm Principle examin'd. Of Suspence and Assent. Of Great Likelihood, Freedom from Actual Doubt, Fair Probabilities, and other Mock-Certainties.

§. I. **H**E introduces his Discourse thus: So that this is to be entertain'd as a Firm Principle by all those who pretend to be Certain of any thing at all, that when any thing is prov'd by as good Arguments as that thing is capable of, and we have as great assurance that it is, as we could possibly have supposing it were, we ought not in reason to make any doubt of the Existence of that Thing. This is Dr. T's FIRM PRINCIPLE, and it should be a kind of FIRST PRINCIPLE too, being so universally necessary that without admitting this, no man can be Certain of any Thing at all, nor any Thing at all be Certain to any man. You see, Gentlemen, how much depends upon it, and I conceive you will easily conclude it ought to be as Evident and as Firm as any First Principle extant; since according to his way of Discourse, all Truths, even the most precious Concerns in the world (particularly the possibility of proving a Deity) must run its Fate, and

be establish'd or ruin'd by its standing or falling. Now my Judgment of it is this, That 'tis the most ridiculous piece of Folly, and the most pernicious abstract of pithy Nonsense that ever was laid down since Mankind was Mankind, by any sober man, for such a Principle without which no Certainty at all can be had, no not even that there is a God.

I charge it therefore with four Faults. First, that 'tis Unprov'd ; next 'tis Unevident of it self, and so no Principle ; thirdly, that were it evident, 'tis Impertinent to the end 'tis produc'd for ; and lastly, it betrays all Religion into the possibility of being a Lye, instead of establishing it.

§. 2. And, first, it appears that he intends it as a *Conclusion* by his introducing it with *So that*, &c. after his former Discourse : But as I have already confuted That, so I discern not any title it has to be Sequel from those Premisses, in case they were True. For what a mad consequence is this, Diverse things bear diverse kinds of Proofs, some weaker, some stronger, therefore when we have the best the Object can afford us, we are to rest satisfi'd the thing *is* ? How, I say, does this follow, unless he had first made out, or at least suppos'd, that the least of those Proofs was satisfactory ; or that there is no Object in the world but is capable of yielding light enough to satisfy ; which Position every days experience convinces of Falshood. Indeed, if he meant by these words, that upon our seeing the Thing is capable of no *Conclusive Proof*, it is wisdom in us to sit down satisfy'd that

that *no more is to be had*, and so surcease our farther quest, I understand him very well; but that I should be satisfy'd the thing is *so*, or acquiesce to its Truth, (as he must mean to make it be for his purpose) not from the Conclusiveness of the Grounds it stands under, or the prevalence of the Object upon my Understanding subduing it to Assent, but because that Object is capable to bear no more, or to discover it self no better to my sight, is in plain terms to say, that because the Object affords me no certain light to know whether it be or no, therefore I will hold my self well appay'd, and think 'tis Certain; or thus, Though I see absolutely speaking 'tis Uncertain, yet as long as I see withal the Object can bear no more, or cannot be made absolutely Certain, I will therefore rest satisfy'd, or judge 'tis absolutely Certain. If this be not his meaning, I desire himself to inform me better: 'Tis evident to me it can be no other, if he mean any thing at all. His Intent is to evince a Deity, and I declare heartily I have that good opinion of him as to hope that, settled perhaps in that Assent by Practical Self-evidence as are the Vulgar, and not by Skill or Principles as Scholars are, (for his Speculation makes it absolutely Uncertain) he judges it to be *absolutely Certain*: Either then he judges his Motives he has to evince it, Conclusive or no; If Conclusive, there needs no running about the Bush to tell us of several kinds of Proofs, or laying such whimsical Principles, fit for nothing but to make the witty Atheist laugh at Christianity; but it had been enough to stand

so it heartily that the Thing must be so, because the Arguments he brings conclude it to be so. But, in case he fear'd his Motives were not absolutely *Conclusive*, or able to evince the *Truth* of the Point, (and that this is his Sentiment appears by his blaming me here, p. 29. for pretending to such to ground Faith) then indeed it was but good Policy, or rather plain Necessity, to lay some Principles, by means of which he might compound the business between the Object and the Understanding, after the same manner (though this seems but an odd method of *proving*) as Friends take up differences between good natur'd Creditors and the Debtor, when he that owes is willing to do his utmost, but yet is not solvent; and (as was said before) so to *accord* the business to avoid rigorous *Disputes*; that, though the Understanding sees, absolutely speaking, the Thing is *Uncertain*, and more Light, if it could be had, is in reality *due* ere it can be satisfy'd of its absolute Certainty; yet, because the Object is able to afford no more, 'tis awarded by their Umpire Dr. T. that the kind-hearted Understanding is to be content to rest *appay'd*, and hold it notwithstanding to be absolutely Certain; which is the same as to say, that though I do not *see* the Thing to be so, yet because the thing it self *cannot* be *seen* to be so, I will fancy strongly or judge I *see* it to be so. Let us parallel it by Analogy to our Corporal Sight, and the Discourse stands thus: Though I see not the Wall to be white, because 'tis so far distant, or the Air dusky, yet because I can see it no better, the
Wall

Wall thus circumstanc'd not being able to inform my Eye clearly; therefore despairing of the Walls affording me any better sight of it self, I will piece out that degree of obscurity in the Object, with a strong bending my Eyes till I fancy verily I see it to be white; or rather, out of a civil compliance with it's defect of visibleness, I will verily judge and conclude it to be indeed of such a colour; and then if any object folly to me for assenting upon infirm Grounds, I will tell him he is ill-natur'd and unmerciful, the poor Wall has done (alas) all it can, and who can in reason desire more?

§. 3. I expect Dr. T. will pretend degrees of Intellectual Sight, and that by a less degree of Evidence he sees the Thing to be, though 'tis not manifested to him by the greatest; but 'tis impossible and even contradictory to Common Sense to imagine that a Reason which fal's short of being (according to the Maxims of Right Logick) absolutely Conclusive, should beget any true Evidence or Intellectual Sight at all: if then he have no Conclusive Reason, he is convinc'd to have no kind of Evidence: If he have, let him produce it and stand by it; and not persist thus to wrong the most weighty and most excellent Cause in the World, by advancing such Ridiculous Principles which like gilded Bubbles look prettily at first, but if we come once to grasp them close, instead of solidity and Firmness, which ought to be the Temper of Principles, they vanish into perfect Nonsense and Contradiction; importing in effect, that though we ought to hold the *Absolute Certainty* of the

the Thing (for, I suppose he would have his Auditors hold so concerning a Deity) yet, because the Object admits *no more* Certainty, we must fancy we have it *without* the Object: which amounts to this, that we must necessarily hold a thing to be *that* which 'tis impossible it should in those Circumstances be *seen to be*; that is, it must be held to be *that*, (*viz. absolutely Certain*) which at the same time 'tis held *Impossible* it *should be*. Is not this strange Logick!

§. 4. This Firm Principle then is far from being prov'd. Perhaps, it can need none, and so Dr. T. is excusable for not having prov'd it; nay more, commendable; For, First Principles, even by their being *First*, are incapable of proof, as himself says very well. (p. 38.) *because there is nothing before them to demonstrate or prove them by*; and certainly, this Principle, if any has title to be held one of the very First, because (as Dr. T. says here) no man can be certain of any thing at all, unless he entertains this as a Firm Principle. Wherefore, because it cannot be *prov'd* or *made Evident*, and yet must be *Evident*, it must be *Self-evident*; that is, its Terms must need nothing to discover their necessary connexion but Themselves, or the Knowledge of their own Notions. To do Dr. T. right then, we will take its Terms asunder, and then see what they have to say to one another. His Principle form'd into a Categorical Proposition, is this: *Whatever thing is proved by as good Arguments as 'tis capable of, and as well assur'd to us as it could possibly be, supposing it were,—is not to be doubted of in reason*

reason but that 'tis. Where all before the Copula
[is] is the Subject of the Proposition; and all af-
ter it the Predicate. This known, that I may of-
fer my Adversary fair play, I will endeavour to
clear his true meaning, lest cavilling at Equivocal
words, I may justly seem to baffle, as himself does
constantly, when I ought to dispute. His Pred-
cate seems to me very clear and void of all ambi-
guity: but these words in the Subject *as 'tis capa-
ble of* and *as it could possibly be* may bear two
Sences; one that the thing is *absolutely* incapable
in any circumstance to be seen more evidently, or *ab-
solutely Impossible* to be better assur'd to us; or else
that 'tis only incapable or Impossible to be such
hic & nunc, that is, taking the Understanding and
Object thus circumstanc'd, though, absolutely speak-
ing it could most perfectly be seen, and most abso-
lutely assur'd to us: Now 'tis evident from his In-
stance of *Jamaica*, and the End he designs by it,
viz. the knowledge of a Deity, that he takes the
words [*capable*] and [*possible*] in this later sence;
namely, for what's such (partly at least) from the
Circumstance, and not wholly from the Object it
self absolutely consider'd; for 'tis manifest that
Jamaica it self is more evidently known by them
who live in it than by us, and the Existence of the
Deity more clearly seen and better assur'd to those
in Heaven, and in likelihood to some particular
Saints on Earth, especially illuminated, than 'tis to
Us, or the Generality. This being so, the true
meaning of his Principle stands thus: *Whatever
thing is prov'd by as good Arguments as* (considering
the

the circumstances of the Object and the Understanding) *'tis capable of, and as well assur'd to us as* (considering the same circumstances) *it could possibly be supposing it were—is—not to be doubted of in reason but 'tis.* And now I request Dr. T. to go to work like a Scholar, and show me by what means one can possibly see these two Terms to be the same, and so the Proposition to be True? Is it by means of their being *materially* the same, or *the same with a Third*? Where is this Third Term to prove it? And why does not he produce it? Or indeed how can this be pretended, since, according to him, no man can be Certain of any thing at all, nor consequently of the Connexion of that Third Term with two others, unless this Firm Principle be *first* admitted. Is it then by their being the same with one another immediately, or of the same most formal notion? Dr. T. disavows it absolutely, for then the Proposition were *Identical*, which he makes a publick Declaration to all the world *he will have nothing to do with.* Is one of the Terms the Definition, or a direct part of the Definition of the other, that so (at least) they may deserve to be held to some degree formally Identical, though not *most formally*? Himself pretends it not; and did he pretend it, 'twill appear shortly how far they are from such a near Relation and Connexion to one another. Is there then any *other way* left for these Terms to *cohere*, which is neither *by themselves* immediately, nor *by a Third*? Not all the wit of man can invent or even imagine any other: 'Tis evident then they cohere not at all,

all, and so the Proposition is so far from being a First Principle, that 'tis absolutely *False*.

§. 5. This is farther demonstrated, because its Contradictory is *True*. For 'tis plain to common Sense that many things prov'd by as good Arguments as (in these circumstances) they are capable of, and as well assur'd to us as (in these circumstances) they could possibly be, supposing they were, are yet, for all that, liable to doubt: For some things are so remov'd from our knowledge that we can have but very little Light concerning their Natures and Existence: Must therefore every Reason in that case, how slight and trivial soever, be necessarily judg'd sufficient to make the Thing be held undoubtedly *True*. Some think they have probable Arguments that there are Men in the Moon, and in the rest of the Stars; must they therefore upon some likely or seeming Reason judge the thing is so, because 'tis not capable, considering our Circumstances, even *though it were*, to be known better. There is some Probability the King of *China* is now while I write, consulting about the affairs of his Empire, or else at a Feast, or a Hunting, because Monarchs use such Employments and Entertainments, and in these circumstances 'tis all the Light I can have concerning that point: Is it therefore pass'd doubt that 'tis so? Who sees not that witty men find plausible Reasons for any thing, even though it be most forrein from our Circumstances of knowing it certainly; and, so, in case it were, could give us no more light concerning it self; must it therefore be forth-

with

with held *undoubtedly so*? Suppose it were propos'd to debate whether the Stars were even or odd, and no better Argument could be found (as truly, though it be a ridiculous one, 'tis hard to find a better) but onely this, that *Virgil* says;

—*Numero Deus impari gaudet.*—

And therefore Odd Number is the best, and so fitting to be found in such vast and Noble parts of the Universe as the *Stars*. Were it not a wise business now upon so simple a Reason to judge that the Stars are undoubtedly *Odd*? Yet this is perfectly agreeable to Dr. T's First Principle. This is all the Light the Stars are capable to give us at this distance, and were they indeed *Odd*, yet we could have no knowledge of them by any better Arguments than this, so that we must either content our selves with this, or take nothing; wherefore says Dr. T. unless you will deny a most *Firm Principle*, and by doing so be rendred incapable of being *Certain of any thing* (too great a penalty one would think for so small a fault!) the Thing must be concluded *Certain*, and *Odd* they shall be.

§. 6. Be it spoken then with honour to Dr. T. he is the first Author of this All-ascertaining First Principle, which by the way, is a shrewd Argument 'tis none, since Nature never instill'd it into all Mankind) and of a new method to arrive at Certainty of all things, so easie, so compendious, as the World never heard the like; all, even the rudest may comprehend it, nay perhaps be as wise

wise as the wisest: For all can understand as much of the Object as in their circumstances they *can* do, and the wisest can do no more; and this rare Method requires no more but that the Object be known as well as 'tis capable to be known in every ones circumstances, and that the Persons do *not* doubt of it; which the rudest will do the least of all other; which done, they are according to him *Certain* of it, and all is well.

§. 7. This Principle is moreover utterly Imper-
 rinent to the End 'tis produc'd for. To show
 which, we are to consider, that we are bound to
Assent to the Existence of a Deity, to *hold it firmly*
 as a *Certain Truth*, and *dy* (if need were) to *attest*
 it, and not barely *not to make any doubt of it*. To
 declare this point more fully, and so manifest how
 far short Dr. T. falls, when he undertakes to lay
 Principles, we are to reflect, that we have two
 A&ts of our Understanding, call'd *Assent* and *Dis-*
Assent, that is, an interior *yielding* or *denying* a
 thing to be; between which is plac'd a kind of
Neutral A&t, which is neither one nor the other,
 call'd *Suspense*. Now the two former of these
 consist in an Indivisible, as do their Objects, *is* and
is not, and so admit no Latitude. But *Suspense*,
 even for that very Reason, admits of many de-
 grees, which I explain thus. If we consider it
 abstractedly from its differences, 'tis a meer not
 yielding to Assent and *Disassent*, and (if any
 where) 'tis found, or at least conceivable to be
 found in the very middle between those two A&ts
 now mention'd, without the least inclination to

either of them; wherefore one of its Differences is inclining towards *Assent*, and may perhaps not untruly be call'd *Intellectual Hope*; because, if the thing be our Concern, 'tis apt to principle that disposition of the Will which we properly call by that name. The other Difference is a *disinclining* to Assent, or an *Inclining towards Dissent*, which it were not much amiss to term *Intellectual Fear*; because, if we be concern'd in the Being of that Thing, 'tis apt to excite in us that Passion or disposition of the Will which is call'd by that name; whence 'tis generally call'd *Doubt*, which includes some degree of *Fear*. These two Differences have innumerable multitudes of other Differences or Degrees compris'd under them, according as the Probabilities (which here solely reign) are apt to beget more or less Appearance of *Likelihood* that the Thing is; but no Probability how high soever can in true Reason beget *Assent*, because the highest Probability that is can only render the thing seen to be *highly probable to be*, which is evidently a different effect from making it seen to be absolutely, really, and indeed; since when I once see this by virtue of some *Conclusive* (that is, more than probable) motive, I see 'tis *Impossible hic & nunc* not to be, or impossible my Conclusion should be False; but I do not see this when I have a very high Probability; Experience telling every man who is meanly practis'd in the World, that very high Probabilities often deceive us; as when a Glass thrown against the Ground breaks not; when a House deem'd very strong falls down suddenly;

denly, and a thousand such-like odd Contingen-
cies. But there needs no more to evince that all
is to be called *Suspense*, till we arrive at *Assent*, than
to reflect that *Suspense* is *relative* to *Assent*, as
appears by the English phrase [*To suspend ones As-*
sent] intimating that as soon as *Suspense* is taken
away, immediately *Assent* follows; which de-
velopes into this, that all is *Suspense* till we come
to *Assent*. Indeed, some things so very seldom
happen, as, that a House, seemingly firm, should
fall, and such like rare Casualties, that unatten-
tive men are apt to assent absolutely upon such a
very high Probability; and even in the wisest it
seems to counterfeit a perfect *Assent*, and to have
no degree at all of *Suspense* in it; notwithstanding
I absolutely deny any truly-wise or rational
man goes to work on that manner; but, by seeing
the Casualties to which our Uncertain state is ex-
pos'd, and laying to heart the sudden Chances that
happen to others, which might have been his own
case; hereupon, not with a perpetual anxious doubt
(the danger is too unlike y to require that) but
with a prudent care, lest it should be his own Lot
to be so suddenly surpriz'd, he endeavours to stand
daily on his guard, and out of that consideration,
to keep a good Conscience and a Will resign'd to
Gods in all things; which disposition evidently
discovers some degree of *Suspense*. As for care-
less and inconsiderate Livers, I doubt not but they
often Assent absolutely the world's their own, be-
yond reason, that is, out of meer passion and pre-
cipitancy, till some imminent danger give a check

to their blind Security, but the Reward of their Unreasonableness and Rashness in assenting absolutely without just ground, is this, that they have even from hence some less degree of Concern to amend their lives; and, if they be overtaken with any sudden disaster, less (if any) resignation to Gods holy disposition than they would have had, had they kept awake that degree of Suspense in their minds which Right Reason (the nature God had given them) requir'd they should.

§ 8. 'Tis time now to apply this discourse to Dr. T's Performances. It appears hence that one may have no reason to *doubt* of a thing, and yet withall have no reason in the world to *assent* firmly to it as a most Certain Truth, which onely is to his purpose: And this may be done two ways, either by perfectly suspending and inclining to neither side; as we experience our Understanding now bears it self in order to the Stars being Even or Odd: Or by strongly *hoping* or *inclining* to *Assent* the Thing is True; as when we expect a Friend such a time at London who never us'd to break his word; which expectation, though one may have very great ground to *hope* will not deceive us, yet it were a mad thing to assent to it as firmly as I do to my Faith, or that there is a GOD. But what I most admire is, that Dr. T. can think an Actual *not doubting*, or *seeing no just cause to doubt*, is a competent assurance of the Grounds for Christian Faith, as he all over inculcates. For not to repeat over again what hath been lately prov'd, that a bare *not doubting* is not sufficient

to make a man a Christian, 'tis evident first that Turks, Jews and Heathens, the Generality at least, are fully perswaded what they hold is true, and *see no just cause to doubt it*; whence by this kind of arguing, if it be sufficient for Christian Faith to have such Grounds as exclude Doubt in its Adherents, Turcism, Judaism, and perhaps Paganism too, may claim to be true Religions by the same Title; and, if the Certainty or Security of Christian Religion be no more but a freedom from doubt, all those wicked Sects have good reason to be held *Certain* too; and so both sides of the Contradiction may become Certain, by which stratagem Dr. T. is as compleatly revenged of his Enemies, *Identical Propositions*, as his own heart could wish, and rewards his dear Friends and faithful Abettors, direct Contradictions, very honourably; advancing them to be First Principles, and even as Certain as Faith it self. Secondly, Passion and Vice can breed in a man a full persuasion that an Error is True, and such an apprehension as shall take away all Actual Doubt; nay the more Passion a man is in, and the more obstinate he is in that passion, the less still he doubts: so that by Dr. T's Logick no man can tell whether Christianity be indeed *Rationally-wise or passionately-foolish*, in case the Test of its Certainty, or the Adequate Effect of its Grounds be not a *steady Assent* that 'tis True; that is, if the Motives to embrace it be not *Conclusive* of the Truth of its Doctrine, but only *Exclusive* of Doubt. Thirdly, Ignorance and dull Rudeness is easily appay'd with any silly Reason

and so a most excellent way to be void of Actual Doubt, nay of all men in the world those who are perfectly ignorant see the least cause of doubting, being least able to raise any; wherefore, if being *free from seeing any just cause of doubt*, be the utmost Effect of Christian Grounds, let all Christians be but grossly ignorant, and they shall immediately without more ado become as *Free from Actual Doubt* as may be; and by that means be the best Christians in the world, and, consequently, *Ignorance* be fundamentally establish'd by Dr. T. *the Mother of all True Devotion*. Fourthly, Though out of a stupid carelessness men use to take many things for granted upon slight Grounds while 'tis cheap to admit them, and no danger accrues upon the owning them; yet experience teaches us, that when any great Inconvenience presses, as the loss of Friends, Livelihood, or Life, Reason our true Nature, teaches men to study their careless thoughts over again; by which means they begin now to *Doubt* of that which before they took for granted, if they have not Certain Motives to establish them in the Truth of what they profess, and to ascertain to them some equivalent Good at least to what they are in danger to forego. In which case I fear it will yield small strength to a man put in such a strong Temptation, to find upon review of his Grounds, that they were onely able to make him *let them pass* for good ones, while the Concern was remoter and less; but that notwithstanding all these, he sees they may perhaps be False, and himself a great Fool for holding

holding them True without Reasons convincing them to be so, and consequently foolish (perhaps wicked to boot) for suffering so deeply to attest them. If Dr. T. reply, That such men dying for what they conceiv'd Truth, meant well, and consequently acted virtuously; I must ask him how he *knows* that, or can make *them* know it, unless he propose Motives to conclude those Tenets True: For as Error is the Parent and Origin of all Vice, so is Truth of all Virtue; nor is Virtue any thing but a Disposition of the Will to follow Reason or Truth. Whence, if we cannot be absolutely Certain any Tenet we follow is Truth, we cannot be absolutely Certain any Action is Virtuous; and 'tis not enough to make a man Virtuous to mean well in common, or intend to do his Duty, and be onely free from doubt all the while, unless they have some substantial Truth to proceed upon, which renders their meaning and particular Action Good as to the main, by directing it to that which is mans true Happiness: For 'tis questionless that the Generality of the Heathens who worship'd *Juno, Venus, Vulcan*, and the rest of that Rabble, meant well in Common, were free from actual doubt, nay had Dr. T's Moral Certainty too, that is, had a firm and undoubted Assent upon such Grounds as would fully satisfy a Prudent man, for many of them were men of great Natural Prudence, and were actually satisfy'd with the Motives they had for Polytheism; Lastly, they had Dr. T's Firm Principle too on their side, for they had (as far as they could discern) the Judgment

ment of the whole World round about them, that is, as much as the nature of the thing could give them, though it were ; for had there been indeed such Gods and Goddesses, yet, being in Heaven, they could have no more light concerning them than by Authority of others (relating also, as doubtlesly they did, many wonderful things conceived to be done by their means) and on the other side they had all the Authority extant at that time for them ; and what doubts soever a few Speculative and Learned men rais'd concerning them, yet the Generality, who were unacquainted with their thoughts, had no occasion to raise any at all : These advantages I say, the Heathens had, parallel within a very little, if not altogether, to Dr. T's Grounds and Principles ; that is, able to produce an equal Effect, *viz. Not-doubting* : Yet because all hapt to be a Lye that they proceeded on, all their Religion for all this was wicked ; and the the most zealous Devotion to Dame *Juno* and the rest, nay dying for their sakes, was notwithstanding their good meaning in common, Dr. T's Moral Certainty and Firm Principle, a diabolical and mischievous Action, not a jot better, as to the effect of gaining Heaven, than the making their Children pass through the Fire to *Moloch* ; perverting and destroying the Soul that perform'd it, nay dy'd for it ; by *adding* it to what was *not* its *true last End* or Eternal Good ; and all this because there wanted *Truth* at the bottom to render those Actions and Sufferings *Virtuous* : Wherefore unless Dr. T. produces some immoveable Grounds to

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establish Christianity to be most certainly *True*, especially the Existence of a Deity; which established, all the rest falls down to the Ground, we can never convince that either Acting or Suffering for it is a *Virtue*, any more than it was in Heathenism when the same was done for their False Gods, and so he can never with reason persuade his Auditory to it; but having once prov'd that, it matters less whether all the Assenters penetrate the full force of the motive or no; for if once it be put to be *True*, all Actions and Sufferings proceeding from those Truths shall connaturally addict those Souls to their True Last End, and dispose them for it, though their Understandings be never so imperfect; and their good or well-meaning will certainly bring them to Heaven; but 'tis because their Will and its Affections were *Good*; which they could not be (as is prov'd) were they not built upon some *Truth*.

§. 9. Again, Dr. T. discourses all along as if all were well when one is free from all doubt; but I would desire his Friends seriously to ask him one question, which is, whether, though his Grounds exclude all doubt from his mind *at present*, yet he sees any certain Reason why he may not perhaps come to doubt of *all* his Faith, and even of a God-head too *to morrow*? If he says, *He sees not but he may*, he must say withal, that he *sees it not* (and consequently holds it not) *to be True*; for if he once *saw* it to be *Truth*, he could not hold it *possible* ever to be *doubted* of with reason. If he affirms that he sees he can never come with reason to doubt
of

of it, then he sees his Grounds for holding it *cannot possibly be shown False*, else it might both be *doubted* and (what is more) *deny'd*; and if he hold his Grounds cannot possibly be made out to be *False*, then he must say they are *Impossible to be False*, and if they be Humane Authority, *Infallible*; which yet he stiffly denies. But the plain Truth is, he holds not (by virtue of any Grounds he lays) his Faith to be *True*, but onely a plausible Likelihood; else Common Sense would force him to acknowledge and stand to it, that the Grounds on which he builds his Assent are *Impossible to be False*, and not to palliate his Uncertainty of it with such raw Principles and petty Crafts to avoid an honest down-right procedure, which is to say plainly, *My Grounds cannot fail of Concluding the Thing absolutely True, I will justify them to be such, and here they are*: But he is so far from this, that the best word he affords them who do this right to Christianity, is to call them *vapouring and swaggering men*, with all the disgraceful Ironies he can put upon them.

§. 10. By this time my last Charge that this Firm Principle of his betrays all Religion into the Possibility (I might have said *Likelihood*) of being a *Lye* instead of establishing it, is already made good, and needs onely a short Rehearsal. For, 1. He Asserts that we cannot be Certain of a Deity unless we entertain his *Firm Principle*, which is so full stuff with Nonsense and Folly, that unless it be in *Bedlam*, I know no place in *England* where 'tis like to find *Entertainment*. That the Evidence

Or

or Visibility of an Object begets Certainty in us, is that which the Light of Nature ever taught me and all Mankind hitherto; but that the Obscurity of an Object, or its affording us no *True Evidence* grounding our *Absolute Certainty* of it, nay that even its *Incapableness* to afford us any in our Circumstances, and consequently our *Despair* of seeing any such Evidence for it, should contribute to make us *Certain* of it; nay more, that this *must be entertain'd as a Firm Principle*, and which is yet more, be obtruded upon all Mankind under such an unmerciful Penalty that unless they entertain this as honourably as a *Firm Principle*, not any man shall be *Certain* of any thing, no not so much as that there's a God, is such a super-transcendent Absurdity as surpasses all Belief, or even Imagination: but a Rhetorician may say any thing, when talking pretty Plausibilities is onely in vogue, and a merodious Gingle to please the Ear, is more modish than solid Reasons to satisfy the Understanding. Next, he vouches not any Reason he brings to be absolutely Conclusive, and consequently owns not any Point of Faith, no not the Existence of a Deity, to be absolutely Certain; which not to *assert*, but (as has been shown from his *Firm Principle*) equivalently to *deny*, even then when he is maintaining it, is an Intolerable Prejudice to that Weighty and Excellent Cause he hath undertaken, and, so, is engag'd to defend. 3. He waves the *Conclusiveness* of his Reasons that the Thing is *True*, and contents himself that it keeps us free from actual doubt, which reaches not *Assent*;

sent; for to doubt a thing is *to incline to think it False*; and so, *not to doubt*, is barely *not to incline to think it False*, which is far short of holding it True, and consequently from making a man a Christian. Besides, our *not doubting* may be in many regards Faulty, and spring from *Surprize*, *Passion*, and *Ignorance*, as well as from *Ignorance* (as hath been prov'd) but a good Reason *cannot* be faulty. Wherefore to relinquish the patronage of the Goodness and Validity, that is, absolute Conclusiveness of Christian Proofs (of which there are good store) for this point, defending onely their Plausibility, and instead of that victorious way of *convincing* the Understanding into *Assent*, requiring onely a feeble *not doubting*, is in plain terms to betray his Cause, and tacitly (or rather, indeed, too openly) to accuse Christianity of an Infirmary in its Grounds, as being incapable to effect what they ought, a *Firm Assent* to the Points of Christian Doctrine as to *absolutely certain Truths*.

4. By making our Certainty of it, or the adequate effect of its Motives consist meerly in our *not doubting* of it, he makes its Effect, and consequently the Efficacy of those Motives themselves, no better than those which Heathens, Turks and Hereticks have; for these also exclude Actual Doubt from the Minds of the Generality of these respective Sects: If he says Christians have no just reason to doubt, I ask him how he will prove that it must needs exclude all reason of Actual Doubt from the Minds even of the wisest Christians, unless he can prove those Grounds *cannot* possibly be doubted

of with reason ; for, otherwise, if those men may possibly doubt with reason, 'tis ten to one they will do so *actually* at one time or other. He ought then to say those Motives exclude *all possible doubt*, or are *undoubtable* of their own nature, and so take it out of the *Subjects* strength or weakness, and put it upon the *Objects* ; But this he is loth to say, dreading the Consequence, which is this, that he who affirms a Thing can never be possibly doubted of in true reason, must affirm withal that he has Motives concluding it *absolutely True*, that is, *absolutely Impossible to be False*, and, if it depends on Authority, *Infalible Testimony* for it, which his superficial Reason, fully resolved against First Principles or *Identical Propositions*, can never reach. It remains then that he must hold to Actual Not-doubting *on the Subjects side* ; that is, he must say the Motives are onely such as preserve prudent persons from doubt ; and then he must either make out that Christians have more Natural Prudence than those in those other Sects, (Natural, I say, for all Motives Antecedent to Faith, must be Objects of our Natural Parts or Endowments) or else confess that he knows no difference between the Reasons for those other Sects and those for Christianity, according to the Grounds deliver'd by him here. Both exclude Actual Doubt in persons, as far as appears to us, equal in prudence as to other things ; neither of them exclude possible Rational Doubt ; each one had as much Evidence of their Deities they ador'd as they could have in their circumstances supposing those
Deities

Deities were, and no True or absolutely Conclusive Evidence appear'd on either side ; both had as good Proofs as the thing afforded supposing it were, and such as excluded *Doubting*, therefore (according to Dr. T's Doctrine) both had Certainty, and all is parallel : and so farewell Christianity, Religion, and First Principles too, that is, farewell Common Sense, and all possibility of knowing *any thing*. All Truth and Goodness must needs go to wrack, when Principles naturally self-evident, and establish'd by GOD himself, the Founder of Nature, are relinquish'd, and others made up of meer Fancy and Air are taken up in their stead.

§. 10. I know Dr. T. will sweat and fume, and bestir all his knacks of Rhetorick to avoid these Consequences of his Doctrine : I expect he will pelt me with Ironies and bitter Jeers, cavil at unelegant words, tell me what some Divines of ours say, and perhaps mistake them all the while, stoutly deny all my Conclusions instead of answering my discourse, nay fall into another peevish fit of the Spleen, and say I have no *forehead* for driving on his Principles to such Conclusions as he (who was too busie at Words to mind or amend his Reasons) never dream't of. Therefore to defend my *forehead*, it were not amiss to make use of some *Phylacteries* containing such expressions taken out of his First Sermon as best discover to us his thoughts as to the Certainty and Uncertainty of his Positive Proofs, and the Point it self as prov'd by them ; I mean the *Existence of a Deity*, or a
Creation.

Creation. Such as are *Serm. p. 19.* A Being sup-
 posed of Infinite Goodness, and Wisdom and Power, is
 a very **LIKELY** Cause of these things. — What more
LIKELY to make this Vast World &c. — What more
LIKELY to communicate Being — What more
LIKELY to contrive this admirable Frame of the
 World — This seems **NO UNREASONABLE**
 Account — *P. 21.* The Controversie between Us
 and this sort of Atheists, comes to this, Which is the
MORE CREDIBLE OPINION, That the World
 was never made, &c. or that there was from all Eter-
 nity such a Being as we conceive **GOD** to be —
 Now, **COMPARING** the **PROBABILITIES**
 of things, that we may know **ON WHICH SIDE**
THE ADVANTAGE LIES, &c. — *P. 22.*
 The Question whether the World was created or not,
 — can only be decided by **TESTIMONY** and
PROBABILITIES of Reason; Testimony is the
PRINCIPAL Argument in a thing of this nature;
 and if **FAIR PROBABILITIES** of Reason con-
 cur with it, &c. — *P. 29.* The **PROBABILI-
 TIES** of **REASON** do all likewise **FAVOUR**
 the Beginning of the World. — *P. 32.* Another
PROBABILITY is, &c. — *P. 34.* These are
 the **CHIEF PROBABILITIES** on our side;
 which being taken together, and in their united force,
 have **A GREAT DEAL** of **CONVICTION**
 in them.

§. 11. Upon these Words and Expressions of
 his, I make these Reflexions. 1. That (as appears
 by his own stating the Point *p. 21.*) he makes it
 amount to the same Question (as indeed it does)
 Whether

Whether there were a *Creation*, or a *First Being* creating the World, whom we call *GOD*; so that all his Proofs are indifferently to be taken, as aim'd to evince one as well as the other. 2. That, this being so, he *stands not heartily to any one Argument* he brings, as able to *conclude the Truth* of a Deity's or Creator's Existence. 3. That his words which are expressive of the Evidence of his Grounds and the Certainty of the Point, (*viz.* that there is a *GOD*) manifest too plainly that he judges (according to his Speculative Thoughts at least) he has neither one nor the other. For, if it be but *Likely*, though it be *exceedingly* such, yet (as common Experience teaches us) it may notwithstanding be *False*: If the account he gives of a Deity creating the World, be onely no *unreasonable* one, this signifies onely that it has *some Reason or other* for it; and every man knows that seldom or never did two Wits discourse contrary Positions, or Lawyers plead for contrary Causes, or Preachers preach for contrary Opinions, but there was some Reasons produc'd by them for either side; and, so, for any thing he has said, the Atheist may come to give no *unreasonable account* too that there is no Deity, though it be something *less reasonable* than that for a Deity. And if the Controversie between Atheists and us be onely this, *Whether is the MORE CREDIBLE OPINION*, then the other Opinion, (*viz.* that there was no *Creation*, or is no *GOD*) is yielded to be *Credible* too, though not *SO Credible* as that there is. Also, if we ought to *COMPARE* the
PRO:

PROBABILITIES of *things that we may know on which side the* **ADVANTAGE LIES**, 'tis intimated to us, and granted that 'tis *Probable* there is *no GOD*, though it be *more Probable* there is; and while 'tis *but Probable*, though it be very much *more*, yet it may very easily be *False*; as every days experience teaches us in a thousand Instances, wherein our selves were *mistaken* through the whole course of our lives; which commonly happen'd when the *far more probable* side prov'd *False*, else we had not inclin'd to *think it true*, and by that means been *mistaken*. Again, if the **PROBABILITIES** of *Reason* do but **FAVOUR** our side, 'tis a sign that the *small* strength they have when they do their *utmost*, is not *earnestly* and *heartily* engag'd neither in the Patronage of our Cause, or in proving it *probable* there's a **GOD**; but onely incline *favourably* towards us rather than the other; Besides, those who are of moderate tempers use to be *favourable* to every Body; and there is not in the whole World such sweet, soft-natur'd, melting, pliable, tender-hearted, compassionate and indulgent things as these same *Probabilities*: They are ever at hand to lend their weak help to any body that wants a good Argument, and will fit any Cause in the World, good or bad: Yet for all their kind and gentle behaviour in obliging none to *assent* to them, or say as they do, as your *rude Demonstrations* use, I have notwithstanding a kind of prejudice against them; which is, that they are *False hearted*, and use to play *Jack-a-both-sides* most egregiously; for scarce was there ever any

Tenet in the world so absurd, but, when not *one good Reason* durst appear for it, this rattling Gossip, Dame *Probability*, would for all that undertake it; and let her have but her neat Chamber-maid Rhetorick to trick her up with Laces, Spangles, Curles, Patches, and other such pretty Baubles, she will dare to incounter with any Truth in the World, or maintain the most absurd Paradox imaginable, as Dr. T. and his Friend well know, else they would be out of heart ever to write more. And this is the Reason, I conceive, why p. 22. he calls them *FAIR*; saying, *If FAIR Probabilities of Reason concur with Testimony*; and no less than thrice in the same page he makes mention of *FAIR Proofs*: He says not *GOOD Proofs*, or *CONCLUSIVE that the Thing is TRUE*, or that *there's a GOD*; no, take heed of that; this would quite take the business out of the hand of Probability, which a Rhetorical Divine ought not to do; for nothing suits with Rhetorick's humour so well as Probability does, and Demonstration cares not one straw for her: But he gives them their just due, and calls them onely *Fair Proofs*, and *Fair Probabilities*, that is, *Pretty, Plausible and Taking*; and if they were not so of themselves, what is there which a little daubing with Rhetorical Varnish will not make *FAIR*! But the Upside or Sum Total of his Proofs is the best sport, if it were not most pernicious; 'tis this, That these *Fair Probabilities taken together and in their united force, have a great deal of Conviction in them.* Which amounts to this plain Confession, though couch'd

couch'd in wary Terms, that there is not *one good Proof* amongst them *all*, yet many *bad* ones put together will make a *good* one. I know indeed that a concurrence of many Likelihoods renders a thing more Probable, and encourages us to Outward Action; but to think that *many Probabilities* will reach that Indivisible Point in which Truth, and consequently our *Assent* to any thing as a *Truth*, is found, is quite to mistake the nature of *Truth* and *Assent* too, which consist in *Is* or *Is not*; and since to *convince rationally* is to *conclude* the thing *is*, I desire Dr. T's Logick to inform the World how (since a Probable Proof is that which onely concludes the thing *Probable*, and consequently many probable ones are terminated in rendring it *MORE Probable*) how, I say, many Proofs onely *Probable*, can conclude the thing to be *MORE THAN PROBABLE*, that is, to be *CERTAINLY*, or *convince* the Understanding that *'tis*; unless they happen to engage some Nature or other, and consequently some *Identical Proposition*; which Dr. T. neither *pretends*, nor goes about to *show*, but on the other side declares himself an utter Enemy to such *Principles*, and consequently to such a way of *Discourse*.

§. 12. In a word, Dr. T's Positive Proofs of a Godhead are reducible to these two Heads, *Humane Testimony* and *Probabilities of Reason*, (as appears by his own words *Serm. p. 22, 23.*) and *Testimony* (which p. 23. he tells us *is the Principal Argument in a thing of this nature*) he divides into *Universal Tradition* and *Written History*: Now

Written History is not therefore *True* because 'tis *writ*, but depends upon *Living Authority* or *Tradition* to authenticate it; and how ridiculous he would make the *Certainty* of *Tradition*, even that which is confessedly grounded on the *Sensations* of great multitudes which is vastly above this here spoken of, is seen in his *Rule of Faith*; and here again he tells us, *Pref. p. 16.* All *Humane Testimony* is *Fallible* (and so all built on it is possible to be *False*) for this plain reason, because all men are *Fallible*: Wherefore, according to his *Grounds*, 'tis concluded there may possibly be *No GOD*, for any thing *Humane Testimony* says to the Point; And 'tis as evident from the very word, that *Probabilities* of *Reason*, though never such *Fair* ones, conclude as little. Lastly, he tells us *Serm. p. 22.* that *Fair Probabilities* of *Reason* concurring with *Testimony*, this *Argument* has all the strength it can have: and thus *Dr. T.* instead of proving there is a *GOD*, has endeavour'd to make out very learnedly that it may be there's no such Thing, and that neither *Reason* nor *Authority* can evince the *Truth* of the Point.

§. 13. I omit his abusing the word *Testimony* (which is built on *Sensations*) in alledging it to prove a *Creation*, which neither was nor could be subject to the *Senses* of the first Mankind, nor consequently could the persuasion of future *Deliverers* and *Writers* have for its Source *Attestation* or *Testimony*: I omit also his neglecting to make use of *Testimony* to prove *Miracles*, *GOD's* proper Effect, which are subject to *Sense*,
and

and which both Christians, Jews and Heathens of all Nations and Times, both unanimously here and the first Seers could properly attest. I suppose his Confidence in his Rhetorick made him chuse the worser Arguments to show how prettily he could make them look; or perhaps the Genius of Things lie so, that the slightest Arguments most need, and so best suit with Rhetorical Discourfers.

§. 14. By this time I suppose Gentlemen, there will appear just reason for that moderate and civil hint I gave Dr. T. in my *Introduction to Faith Vindicated*, of the weakness of his Grounds, in these words: *In which Sermon, under the Title of the [Wisdom of being Religious] and a great many seeming shows, and I heartily think very real Intensions of impugning Atheism, by an ill-principled and (in that circumstance) imprudent and unnecessary Confession in equivalent Terms of the possible Falseness of Faith, nay even as to the Chiefest and most Fundamental Point, the Tenet of a Deity, Religion receives a deep wound, and Atheism an especial advantage, as may perhaps be more particularly shown hereafter* — After which I give his Sermon all its due Commendations, and then subjoyn, *Only I could wish he had right Principles to ground his discourse; without which he can never make a Controversist, but must needs undermine the solid Foundation of Christianity, if he undertake to meddle with the Grounds of it, even while he goes about to defend it. These were my words then, and I am sorry he would needs dare and provoke me to make them good.*

good. In which, if I have justified my self too particularly, let him blame himself. All this while I seriously declare that I am far from thinking that Dr. T. himself is not assur'd that there is a GOD; and farther yet from imagining that *already* holding one, he should hold it possible *afterwards* GOD should cease to be; which ridiculous folly (constant to his prevaricating humour) he puts upon me, p. 8. What I affirm is, That his ill Principles do equivalently confess it possible *here* neither *is* nor ever *was* a GOD; and this I have abundantly shown out of his own words. Yet I doubt not but himself, through GOD's Goodness, has by Practical Self-evidence (in the same manner the Vulgar, who are no Speculators or Scholars, also have it) absolute Certainty of the Existence of a Deity, in despite of his weak Speculations; nay, that in this very Sermon he hath one or two Proofs which have in them the force of a Demonstration; though his not understanding and so ill-managing of them, and then calling them *Probabilities*, has endeavour'd, all that may be, to render them good for nothing. I end with some of his own words, *Pres. p. 37.* That if Dr. T. did in truth believe that the Existence of a Deity or a Creation, are (as he says, *Serm. p. 20.*) so evident, that they can hardly be made plainer than they are of themselves, he should by all means have let them alone, for they were in a very good condition to *shift* for themselves; but his blind and Sceptical way of proving them is enough to cast a mist about the clearest Truths in the world. And I must take the liberty to admonish him

him that it lies not in the power of all the Enemies of Christianity in the world to do it half that *Mischief* as one Christian Divine may; who by his earnestness manifests a desire to do the *best he can*; by the vogue he bears seems able to do the *best that may be done*; yet produces not any one *proof* which he vouches to be *absolutely conclusive* of the *Truth* either of *Christianity*, or a *Deity*, but rather by his carriage denies there are any such, while he talks of *Likelihood*, *Probability*, *more Credible Opinion*, *Moral Certainty*, and such-like, whose very names ought not to be *heard* or *endur'd* in a discourse aiming to settle the Grounds of Faith, or the Tenet of a Deity. Let him consider that he must take his measure of the *Certainty of Grounds* from the *Object* or *Thing*, not from our *freedom from doubt*, and such-like, for these may be *light* and *silly*, whereas the Grounds of Faith being laid by GOD, must necessarily be *wise* and *solid*; and, so, when look'd into, *Absolutely-Conclusive* of the thing. Let us then who hold a GOD, (leaving Creatures to their weaknesses) vindicate our Maker from the scandalous Imputation of governing Mankind tyrannically, by commanding us to assent that a thing *is*, which at the same time we see *may not be*; so obliging us to *hold* (contrary to the Light of Nature, and the very First Principles which Himself had ingrafted in us) that what *is*, is at the same time *possible not to be*; and to profess a point *True*, nay dy to attest its *Truth*, which may perhaps be shown *False* to morrow, nay which our selves *see* may be *now False*. He tells us here in common p. 90. and
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he tells us truly, that which way soever we turn our selves we are encountered with *Clear Evidences and sensible Demonstrations of a Deity*: Why does he then come to make out that point, say, the nature of the thing will not bear *clear Demonstration*, and that only *Mathematical matters are capable of it*? Why pursues he not such Proofs as these, and makes them out, and stands by them, and reduces them to First Principles, and so obliges Humane Nature to assent to them under evident forfeiture of their Sincerity and even Manhood? Is he afraid *clear Evidences and sensible Demonstrations* will not necessarily conclude? Why does he put *Suppositions* that the thing were, and then argue thus blindly, that since *supposing it were* it would give no more light of it self than it does, therefore it is? Is there any necessity for such a ridiculous perplexing and inconclusive method, when we may vouch we have *Clear Evidences and Demonstrations*? Lastly, Why does he distrust the *Objects strength*, and explain our Assurance of a Deity and Faith by *Moral Certainty*, or such as will satisfy prudent men in humane Affairs, Probabilities amassed together, not doubting, and other such like feeble diminutive expressions? Are not *Clear Evidences and Sensible Demonstrations* (that is, *Demonstrations à posteriori*) in point of Certainty incomparably beyond such quivering Grounds and such dwindling Adhesions? I wish Dr. T. would take these things into his better thoughts, and, at least by amending his Expressions and Reasons hereafter, make some tolerable satisfaction for this intolerable Injury done to Faith and GOD's Church.

DIS-

DISCOURSE. VI.

That Dr. T. makes all the Grounds of Christian Faith Possible to be False. Of Infallibility, Demonstration, and Moral Certainty.

§. 1. **T**HUS much to justify my first Charge that Dr. T. made that Fundamental Tenet of a Deity, and consequently all Religion Possible to be False. My second Charge is, that he particularly makes all Christian Faith possible to be false, and 'tis found Faith Vindicated, p. 171, where I put down his own words which concern that purpose: though he, who, presuming on the Partiality of his Friends, takes the Liberty to say any thing which even Eye-sight may Confute, assures his Reader pag. 3. that I *darst not Cite them*. I laid my Charge in this Tenor: 'Tis necessarily consequent from the foregoing Paragraphs, that, if I have Discour'd right in this small Treatise of mine, and have proved that Faith, and consequently its Grounds, must be impossible to be False, then Mr. T.'s Confession, p. 118. (to which Mr. St.'s Doctrine is Consonant) that [It is possible to be otherwise (that is, to be False) that any Book is so Ancient as it pretends

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tends to be, or that it was Written by him whose Name it bears, or that this is the sence of such and such Passages in it] is a clear Conviction that neither is the Book-Rule, he maintains the True Rule of Faith (§. 3.) Nor have he and his Friends True Faith, (§. 4.) And consequently there being no other Rule owned (taking away Private Spirit) but Tradition; that Tradition is the only-True Rule of Faith, (§. 6.) and so the main of Sure-Footing stands yet firm. And, lastly, 'tis evinc't that his own Book which opposes it, opposes the only-True, because the only Impossible-to-be-False, Ground of Faith; that is, he is convinc't in that Supposition to go about to undermine all Christian Faith; Whence the Title of his Probable-natur'd Book (Rule of Faith) is manifest to be an improper Nickname, and the Book in self, to merit no Reply. You see here, Gentlemen, how great stress I lay upon Dr. T.'s confession, that the Ground of his Faith (and consequently his Faith it self) is possible to be False. And really, if he clears himself of it, I must acknowledg I suffer a very great Defeat, because I so much Build upon it: If he does not, he is utterly overthrown as to all intents and purposes, either of being a good Writer, or a solid Christian Divine, and he will owe the World satisfaction for the Injury done to Faith, and the Souls of those whom his Doctrine has perverted, by turning their Faith which ought to be an Assent whose Grounds (and consequently it self) are Impossible to be an Error, or False, into Op-

nion;

men whose Grounds (and, by consequence, it
 self) are possible to be such; and, lastly, unless
 he Avoids or Recants this Error objected, all
 he has Written convinc't without any more
 ado, to be again with and its true Grounds;
 and so it will be quite overthrown in the Esteem
 of all those who have the Nature of Faith writ
 in their hearts; and that 'tis Impossible an Act
 of right Faith (that is, an Assent built on those
 Grounds God has left in the Church for Man-
 kind to embrace Faith, and commanded them to
 believe upon those Grounds, whether Scripture's
 Letter, or the Churches Voice) should be an
 Error, or the Profession of it a Lye; which all
 sober Protestants, Presbyterians, nay almost all
 Sects, except some few witty men, inclining
 much by reading such Authours, to Scepticism;
 that is, inclining to be nothing at all (&c perhaps
 some Socinians) reject, abhorminate, and hate
 with all their hearts. The Charge is laid, and
 the Case is put, now let us come to the Trial:
 Which ere we do, I desire those Readers who
 have Dr. T.'s Preface by them to read his 9th
 page, or else his whole page 118. in his *Rule of*
Faith, lest either of us may injure him by a
 wrong Apprehension. I discourse thus,

2. First, 'tis Evident that he who makes
 the Ground and Rule of Faith possible to be False
 makes Faith it self such likewise; since nothing
 is or can be stronger than the Grounds it stands
 on.

Next, the Rule of Faith to Dr. T. is the

Scripture's Letter, and consequently that what he conceives the Sense of the Scripture is God's Sense, or Faith.

Lastly, that in the place now Cited and Related by him, he speaks of the Authority of the Book of Scripture, and of its Sense, as he acknowledges here, page 13.

These things thus premised, I put him this *Dilemma*. Either he holds what he conceives to be the Sense of Scripture (that is his *Faith*) True, or he does not: If he holds it not to be True, then 'tis unavoidable he must hold it (at least) *possible to be False*, if not actually such. But if he says he holds it to be True, then since after he had spoke of the *security* he had, or had not of the Book and Sense of Scripture, he immediately subjoyns these very words, *It is possible all this way by otherwise*: He as evidently says that what he conceives the Book of Scripture, and Sense of such or such passages in it (that is his *Faith*) is *possible to be False*, as 'tis that what's *OTHERWISE THAN TRUE*, is *False*. I do not know how Dr. T. could possibly speak more plainly what I charge him with, than he has done in these words, unless he should use the word [*False*] which too Candid and Rude expression, would expose him openly to the dislike of all sober men, and therefore he disguis'd it in its more moderate Equivalent [*otherwise*]. I say *Equivalent*: And, if it be not, I would gladly know of him what the word [*otherwise*] relates to: Human Language forbids

bids that any thing can be said to be otherwise unless it be otherwise than something. I ask then otherwise than what does he mean, when, being in the Circumstance of Discourſing, what Security he had of the *Antiquity, Writings, and Sense* of Scripture, he told us, *It is possible* ^{that} *may be otherwise*? Is it not as evident as words can expreſs, he muſt mean, *It is possible* the Book of Scripture is not so *antient* as the Apostles time: *It is possible* it was not *writ* by the Apostles and Evangelists: *It is possible* this is not the *Sense* of it in such passages as concern Faith; for to these, and these only our Discourse, and the Nature and Title of his Book determin'd it; which amounts to this, that none has absolute Certainty of either *Letter* or *Sense* of Scripture, nor consequently of his Faith, in case it be solely ground'd upon that, as he professes. See Reader, how all Truths even the most Sacred ones go to wrack, when men fram'd only for *fine Talk* undertake to *prove*; and how parallel his defence of the Ground of all Christian Faith is to that he gave us lately of the *Existence* of a Deity: He so prov'd a God, that he granted it *possible* there might be none, and now he so proves Scripture to be a *Rule*, that he grants it *possible* it may be no Rule, since common Sense tells us that can never be an Intellectual Rule which followed may lead into Error. By which we see Dr. T. needed here the *Blessing* (as he calls it) of that *Identical Proposition* [*A Rule's a Rule*], else he would not write a Book to prove

Scripture a *Rule*, and then ever and anon in equivalent Language tell us 'tis *none*. I wish he would now and then reflect upon such Evident Truths, and not out of an openly declar'd Feud against those First Principles fall thus perpetually into manifest Contradictions.

§. 3. But how does Dr. T. clear himself of this Charge of mine, or how comes he off from his own words? First, he again puts down those very words, which say over and over what I charge upon him, and then asks very confidently where he says any such thing? which is just as wise a craft as Children use when they hoodwink themselves, and then tell the By-standers they shall not see them. Next, he tells us, that *All*, he says, is, that we are not *Infallible* in judging of the *Antiquity* of a Book, or the *sence* of it, meaning that we cannot demonstrate these things so, as to shew the contrary necessarily involves a contradiction; but yet, &c. Is this all he says? What then is become of those famous words, [*It is possible all this may be otherwise;*] which were only objected? But let us examine what he does acknowledge. Whether he be *Infallibly* certain or no, it matters not: but it should be shewn why, if Scripture be the sole Ground of Faith, some at least in the World who are to Govern and Instruct the Church should not be thus certain of both in case we be bound to assent, and (as we questionless are) dy to attest the Points of our Faith to be *absolutely-certain Truths*. Again, if

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Dr. T. be not *Infallibly certain* of these things; then let him say he is *fallibly certain* of it; which done, Nature will shew him how perfect Non-sence he speaks; whence the same Nature will tell him with a little reflexion, that, since the word *Infallibly* can with good sence be joyn'd with the word *Certain*, either 'tis *adequate* to that word, and extends its sence as far as the others, and then there is no Certainty where there is not *Infallibility*; or it does not extend as far as the word *Certain*; and then we may be *Certain* of some things yet *not-Infallibly Certain*; which, since [*not-Infallibly*] means [*Fallibly*] signifies clearly we may be *fallibly certain* of those things: But common sence teaches us how ridiculous 'tis to say, we are *fallibly certain* of any thing. 'Tis most evident therefore and demonstrable, that there is no Certainty but where there is *Infallibility*; and that we can never be said to be truly *Certain* of any thing, till all circumstances consider'd, we see our selves out of possibility of being deceived. *hic & nunc*, in that very thing. Whence Dr. T. denying *Infallible* assurance of both Letter and Sence of Scripture, is convinc'd to deny all true Certainty of either, and so to render all Faith built upon it Uncertain, that is, *possible to be false*; and, could he with sence take the other part of the distinction, and say, he is *fallibly certain* of it, yet the guilt of the same Position will still remain with him. This Logical Demonstration I produc'd in *Faith Vindicated*, pag. 37. of which

Dr. T. takes notice here pag. 17 thus: *Mr. S. is pleas'd to say that Certainty and Infallibility are all one: concealing thus from his Reader I had ever prov'd it (lest he should be oblig'd to speak to my Proofs, which he neither likes nor uses) and bears himself as if I had only said it: which suppos'd then indeed his bare saying the contrary was a competent Answer. This done, he confutes it manifestly with telling his Readers, I am the first man that ever said it, and that 'tis foolish. I beseech you, Gentlemen, is it the fashion in the Universities to solve Arguments on this manner? That is, to neglect the Premises, call the Conclusion foolish, and think to overthrow the Reason in the Opinion of his Readers, because 'tis not some hackney Argument, brought into play perhaps an hundred times over, and ninety nine times answer'd, but now produc'd first? Certainly, one would think in reason that what has been many times allerdg'd should rather be Righted, because it may have received already many Answers, and not such Proofs as first appear, because 'tis certain they never yet had any at all, nor do I conceive that the Noble and Learned *Virtuosi* of the ROYAL SOCIETY use to reject any Production because the Author of it is the first that invented it; but, they allow it Examination, and, if it hold the Trial, approve it, and commend the Author.*

§. 4. I shall endeavour to give him another Argument of the Necessity of admitting *Infalibi-*

My, though I have good reason to fear he will af-
 ford it again no other Answer but only this, that
 I am the first man that ever produc'd it. 'Tis this.
 Taking the word [*False*] or [*Falsus*] subje-
 ctively, or as in the Subject, that is, as making the
 Judgment *False* or *Erroneous* : 'tis a Participle
 of the Verb [*Fallor*] and signifies *deceived* ac-
 tually, to which corresponds as its proper Power
 [*Fallible*] or, *capable to be deceived* : Now the
 contrary to [*False*] thus understood, is *True*,
 taken also subjectively, or as making the Judg-
 ment which in it is *True* or Un-erroneous in that
 its Act. Wherefore the proper Power correspond-
 ing to that Act must necessarily be that which is
 oppos'd to *Fallible*, that is [*Infallible*] Again,
 taking the word *False* Objectively, or as found
 in the Proposition which is the Object or Cause
 of our Judgment as 'tis *false* or actually *deceived* :
 Its proper Power corresponding to it is [*Capa-
 ble to deceive*] Wherefore, also, taking its Op-
 posit [*Truth*] Objectively, or for the Object of
 our Judgment when 'tis *True*, the proper Power
 corresponding to it must be *Incapable to deceive*.
 'Tis concluded then from both these Considera-
 tions, that we can neither affirm Points or Pro-
 positions of Faith (which are the Objects of
 such Acts) *True*, but we must affirm wihal that
 they are *Incapable* to make us judge *erroneously*
 while we assent to them ; nor that our Judgment
 or Act of Faith can be *True* or Un-erroneous,
 but we must be *Infallible* in so judging. Thus far
 concerning the necessity of admitting *Infallibi-*
 lity,

lity, if we once put our Assents or Acts of Faith to be true *Judgments*. From which 'tis a different Question to ask *how we become* thus Infallible; onely 'tis Evident, that, in case the former Proposition be put, (*viz*, that we must affirm our Acts of Faith True,) *Infallible* we must be, or *Impossible to be in an Error* when we make those Acts. But now, to this Infallibility in those Acts God's Providence leads men diversly according to their several degrees of Capacity: Those who are arriv'd to a great pitch of Learning come to it by absolutely-concluding proofs, call'd *Demonstrations*, that is, by penetrating the nature of the Authority on which it is built: and, such men can make out clearly and distinctly to their own Thoughts the Certainty of that Authority, by discoursing it to themselves & others; they can resolve it into its Grounds, meet with and answer Objections, and in a word, *see* themselves to be Infallibly Certain of it. In these men therefore, though the Truth of their Tenet be indeed taken from the Object (as 'tis always) yet the Clearness, Distinctness, and firm Strength of it springs from the Perfection of their well-cultivated Understanding. Those who are of a weak pitch are led to it by Practical Self-evidence of the nature of Authority, and of the way in common by which they receive Faith; which dim, rude light, even in the simplest, serves to carry them on to act according to right nature when they assent; but they cannot discourse their thoughts, nor resolve them into Principles,

nor

nor answer Objections, nor see themselves clearly to be infallibly Certain. Nay more, the greatest part of these, especially if very simple, do by some lucky chance (or rather by a particular disposition of Gods good Providence) *light* upon this right way, more than by any strength of their own wit, looking into Grounds; but, being in it once, they find that which satisfies them according to knowledges familiariz'd to them by converse with the World, and which are of themselves, solid and satisfactory. In a word, it became Gods goodness so to order things, that the Acts of all the Faithful might be as much as was possible in men of every pitch and capacity, *Rational* or *Virtuous*; whatever Contingency may happen in some particulars; Original Sin, and by it, Passion, Ignorance, or Interest sometimes byassing them and making them act with precipitancy. In which case whatever is *good* in those Acts of Faith is refunded into God, the Author of every good Gift as its Original Cause; what Defective, into the Limitedness and Imperfection of Creatures.

§. 5. This Tenet of *Infallibility* which unprejudic'd Nature teaches even the rudest in things subject to Sense and common Reason, and Learned men in things provable by exact Art, the Adversaries of true Certainty, our Scepticks in Religion, endeavour to render ridiculous and cast a mist about it by the most unreasonable pretence that ever was invented; which is, to affirm

firm that a man cannot be Infallible in one thing but he must be so in all. As if I could not infallibly know what's done in my Chamber or practis'd openly amongst those I converse with, but I must be likewise infallible in knowing what is done in the Moon. And Dr. T. is one of these, (for Contradiction is as natural to him, as 'tis to a fish to swim) : who tells us here pag. 19. That *Omniscience within a determinate Sphere is an Infinitie within a finite Sphere* ; as if it were very evident that to know *All in such a matter* is to know *Infinite*, or all things in the World ; or so hard to comprehend that one may know all the money in ones Purse without knowing all the money that is extant, or all the men in the room without knowing all Mankind ; I wish Dr. T. would shew us why *knowing all* in such a particular matter must needs argue an *Infinite* knowledge ; or why the *knowing all things*, [in a determinate Sphere] (which last words when he came to answer, that is, break his Jest, our Prevaricator prudently omitted ;) may not consist with an ignorance of many things out of that Sphere : Must the word *All in such a matter* needs signifie *Infinite* ? or did the commonest Reason ever thus go wrack ? I suppose my Friends resolute hazard, against Identical Propositions made him fall into this more than childish mistake : For this plain Truth, *What's all but in one matter only, is, all but in one matter only*, had preserv'd him from this Nonsense ; but he took this for his Ground to pro-

proceed upon, that *All in one matter only, is All in every matter*, or, which is more, is *Just*, and so still he continues most learnedly to lay Contradictions for his First Principles, because their Interest, and his are inseparably linked against the Common Enemy, Identical Propositions. This I must confess is a *very smart and ingenious kind of reasoning*, and proper to Dr. T. unless perhaps his sworn Brother at hating First Principles and Papists, put in for a share; It appears by a certain Paper, called *Dr. Stillingfleet against Dr. Stillingfleet*, he is a strong pretender, and will cry hallo. But 'tis time now to return to examine his Answer.

§ 6. It is not necessary indeed to Truth that every one should demonstrate a thing so as to shew that the contrary necessarily involves a Contradiction; for the same thing may be known also through *Practical Self-evidence* to those who cannot demonstrate; but yet the thing must be demonstrable, else 'tis not Knowable or Ascertainable. For *Demonstrable* is a plain honest word, what game soever Dr. T. and his Friend make at it, and imports no more abstracting from subtle quirks, but only *Capable to be known*, or *Intellectually seen* by way of Proof; whence, a Learned man who goes about to prove any thing by strength of severe Reason, ought either to demonstrate it, or he falls short of his Duty. Once more I desire Dr. T. to take me right, and

to reflect that when I say, The Thing is *Demonstrable*, or pretend to *demonstrate*, I do not take the word *Demonstration* with all those many subtleties and perquisites the Schools require; I as little love niceties as any man living, and can as easily dispense with them so the solid part be well provided for, and the Truth of the Thing establish'd, which if it be not done, I make account nothing is done, in these cases in which Assent & dying to attest things to be Truths are required. I onely mean then by *Demonstration* such a *Proof* as is taken not from any *Extrinsical* consideration, as is Authority, which grounds *Belief*, but from the *intrinsical Nature* of the *Thing* or Subject in Dispute, and such a *Proof* as necessarily concludes the Thing to be; which cannot be possibly done without engaging finally some Identical Proposition, or that *Things being what it is*, on which all is built. Now, this being evidently so, (and if it be not, let Dr. T. shew the contrary) I would ask our verbal Divine, why he ought not to *demonstrate*, that is, *prove* by necessary concluding Argument both the Letter and Sence of Scripture, if he would have men assent most firmly to Faith built according to him solely upon their Certainty? Is it not his intent in his Discourses to *Conclude* what he speaks of? How can he do this unless he shews the Conclusion necessarily follows? Again, does he not intend to conclude 'tis a *Truth*, that this is the Letter and Sence of Scripture? He must do so, or else he can never pretend that Faith built
 61 upon

upon it is *Truth*: And if he proves it *True*, must he not at the same time, prove it's Contradictory False: And is any thing False but what says a Thing is *so*, when indeed 'tis *not so*; or is *not so*, when indeed 'tis *so*: which is a direct Contradiction. Wherefore Dr. T. can never Conclude a thing to be *True*, unless he brings a Proof necessarily engaging the *Nature* of the Thing, that is, unless (according to my sence of the Word) he both *Demonstrates*, and also shews the contrary necessarily to involve a Contradiction. Both these satisfactory Certainties, my Grounds attribute to Scriptures Letter and Sence (See *Suref. pag. 116, 117*) in points appertaining to Faith, and he here denies both, *pag. 10*. whence is seen which of us two has more real Honour and Respect for *Scripture*: He who makes neither its Letter or Sence to have any Grounds able to ascertain them, that is, as to our purpose makes them good for nothing, or I who grant and prove both. *§. 7*. I suppose Dr. T. will say again as he did in that point of *Deity*, that the *nature of the Thing will not bear a Certainty* of Scriptures Letter or Sence, that so he may be true to his *first Principle*, and make all Faith *alike* uncertain. I answer, the more blame will fall to their share, who take away the Certainty of that which is the *first Principle* in way of *Authority*, or, *First Authority*, namely *TRADITION*, which, and onely which can Authenticate Books; and, the thing being of high Concern, Practically carry

carry down the same *Doctrina*; and so easily
 preserve the *Book* significative of the same *Sense*.
 Nor doubt I, but 'tis demonstrable that the *Præ-*
dict of *England*; and the Concern of the thing
 joyn'd with the necessary Evidence of any Al-
 teration in a matter. Eaily so nicely Canvass'd and
 continually Us'd, can and will with infallible
 Certainty, bring down the Letter of *Magna*
Charta, the Statute Book, and some Acts of Par-
 liament, the self-same, from year to year, at
 least in matters of high Consequence, and by
 means of the Senses, write Traditionally in some
 mens hearts, correct the Letter, if Printers or
 Copiers should mistake. If Dr. T. asks how I
 prove it: I would tell him that the Nature of
 the Thing must make it *Notorious*, if altered, be-
 cause great multitudes are conversant in it, and it
 being esteemed of a kind of Sacred Nature, weigh
 every tittle of it warily, especially those passa-
 ges that immediately touch some weighty Point;
 whence should some whose Interest 'tis to alter it,
 go about such an Action, it cannot appear a Good
 to the Generality, whose Concerns are highly
 violated by that alteration, to conceal and per-
 mit the Letter to remain Uncorrected: and if it
 could not appear a Good to the Generality to
 consent to alter it, nor become a Motive to the
 rest to attempt a *factum Impossibile*, neither one
 nor the other could *will* to alter it, much less
both conspire to do it, and should they attempt
 it, their *will* must either have no Object and then
 'tis a Power to nothing (that is, no Power) or
 else

else act without an *appearing Good*, and; in both cases the *Will* would be as *Will*. This short hint will let the Reader see the Grounds I go upon: 'tis not now a proper place to pursue such Arguments close, or press them home. I wish I might see some return of the like nature from our two *demonstrating Adversaries*, who think it their best play to laugh at *Principles* and *Demonstrations*, because they know in their Consciences they are perfect Strangers to both.

§ 8. Well: but though Dr. T. denies any *Infallible Certainty* of the Ground of all Christian Faith, let's see at least what *other Certainty* he affords us. And, at the first sight any honest man might safely swear it must be (if any) a *Fallible Certainty*, that is, a very fair piece of Nonsense; for 'tis evident to all Mankind (the Abhorers of First Principles always excepted) that if any Certainty be Infallible, and there be any other besides this, it must needs be a *Fallible* one, since there can be no middle between Contradictories: So that Dr. T. is put to this hard choice, either to bring such a Certainty for the Ground of all Christianity which is no Certainty, or else such an one as is perfect Nonsense, if it be named by its proper Name. Let's see what choice he makes. *We are not* (says he) *Infallibly Certain that any Book, &c.* But yet (believe now the *Opposite* kind of Certainty delivered here pag. 8.) *We have a firm Assurance concerning these matters, so as not to make the least doubt of*
 I them.

them. I marry, this is a rare Certainty indeed !
We have not Infallible Certainty (sayes Dr. T.)
of either Letter or Sense of Scripture, but onely
 such an one as keeps us from *making the least doubt*
of them. Now, since a very easie reflexion teach-
 es us that we have *no doubt* of many things being
 True, nay more, have *strong Hopes* they are True,
 and yet for all that, *hold* them notwithstanding
possible to be false ; 'tis a strange Argument to
 prove he *avows not the possible Falshood of Faith,*
 to alledge that he declared himself he had onely
 such an Assurance, as *not at all to doubt it* : For
 [*not to doubt*] a thing signifies no more, but [*not*
to incline to think it False] which a man may do,
 and yet not at all *hope*, 'tis *True* ; seeing he who
 suspends indifferently from both sides, and in-
 clines to neither, does not at all *doubt* a Thing,
 or *fear* 'tis False, having no imaginable reason
 to ground the least degree of any such *Fear*,
 more than he has to ground any *Hope* of its
Truth. Again, those Speculators who attend
 not to Principles are oftentimes in a perplex'd
 case, and through the Goodness of Nature, hold
 a thing absolutely True, while they attend to
 such motives as connaturally breed that perswasion,
 which thing notwithstanding coming to
 make it out as Scholars, and unable to perform
 it, hereupon consider'd as Speculators they must
 hold *possible to be False* for any thing they know:
 and this I conceive is Dr. T's condition. Regard-
 ing the nature of Faith, and the common Con-
 ceit of Christianity, he cannot but see he must
 if

If he will be a Christian, profess Faith *impossible to be False*; and doubtless he will avow it *such as long as he speaks Nature*, and avoids reflecting on his *Speculative Thoughts*; but, coming once to consider the points of Faith, as standing under such proofs as his Unskilful Art affords him, and conscious to himself (as he needs must) who sleights first Principles, and all Methods to Knowledge) that he hath never an Argument that is *absolutely* or truly *Conclusive*, he is forc'd again, taking in these unlucky circumstances, to avow Faiths Ground, and consequently its self to be *Possible to be otherwise, or False*; being willing to lay the blame on the Grounds of Faith, and to say, they cannot bear Absolutely-Conclusive Proofs, rather than on the defectiveness of his own Skill; and to represent them as unworthy to have the name of *stable Grounds*, rather than he will lose a title of the Fame of being an *able Divine*. Yet I will not say, but the *Christian* in Dr. T. might overcome the *Speculator*, at least ballance him in an equal suspense, or beget in him a pretty good conceit of Faith's Impossibility to be False; but then, when he once reflects that this cannot be maintain'd without admitting *Infallibility*, which is the word the abominable Papists use, nor made out without using First Principles, or *Idential Propositions* (which that malignant Man 723. pretends to build on) immediately the by-ss prevails, and the Idea of Popery once stirr'd up (which haunts his and his Friends fancy

day and night in a thousand hideous shapes) he runs in a fright so far from *Impossibility of Falsity* in Faith, that he comes to a very easy Possibility of its being all a plain Imposture or Ly for any thing he absolutely knows, since Grounds prevailing onely to make him *not doubt of it*, can raise it no higher. Moreover, if this be a good Argument, [*I declar'd my self so assur'd as not to make the least doubt of a thing, therefore I could not avow it possible to be False*] It must be allow'd Argumentative to say, *I am so assured as not in the least to doubt of it, therefore 'tis not possible to be False*. Dull Universities! that had not the wit to light all this while on Dr. T's Principles and way of arguing! They ascertain all things at the first dash without more ado. I have a *firm Assurance* so as not to doubt of the Grounds of Christian Faith, the Letter and Sense of Scripture, therefore by this new Logick, they are concluded Certain and Impossible to be False: In opposition to which, if you tell him the firmness of a Rational Assent ought to be taken from Principles or the Object, not from the Subject's firmly adhering to it, and admonish him that this latter sort of *Firmness* without the other signifies nothing but an Irrational Resolution to hold a thing right or wrong, he cuts you off short, and blames the Grounds of Christian Faith, telling you the nature of the Things will bear no more. At which if your Reason repines, and begins to despair of satisfaction, he tells you *Imartly* that you contradict a First and Firm Principle, that

to have as much Assurance as the thing affords you, is to be Certain of it. Prodigious folly, not to distinguish between these two most evident Notions [*I am fully persuaded*] and [*the Thing is certainly so*]. And alledging our not doubting, or strong adhesion to a thing, for an competent Explication of that Certainty which ought to be the greatest in the whole world, since more Sacred Concerns than any the world can shew are built upon it; which adhesion also, as Nature teaches us, is very frequently an effect of *Passion*: Common Experience manifesting it to be a fault annex to the very Nature of Man, that his Understanding is liable to be byast by his Will, where his very Essence is not concerned, so as not to make the *least* doubt of, may more oftentimes to *hold firmly* whatever habitual Prejudice, Affection to Friends, precipitate haste, or fullen Ignorance has once addicted him to. All I can imagine in Dr. T's behalf is this, that he must alledge he conceives this Assurance or Firm Adhesion is a proper Effect of the Object working it in his Understanding, and that therefore he could not have this firm Assurance or Adhesion to it unless the Thing were indeed such in it self. This every Intelligent man sees is his only way to come off; but this he neither has attempted to do, nor ever shall be in the least able to compass, till he retract his costly anger against First Principles, his drollish Abuses against Demonstration, his Accusing the things of Invisibleness instead of bla-

ming his own bad Eyes ; and lastly, his mis-
call'd Firm Principle, which makes all built upon
it, no better than empty Contradiction. Yet if
he pleases to shew us that the Object doth ratio-
nally *assure* him the thing is *so*, by affording such
proofs as of their own nature are able to make us
assent firmly to it as a Truth, and not only *in-*
cline us towards it as a Likelihood ; let him go to
work Logically (that being the proper Science in
this case) and shew us how, and by what virtue
any proof of his is able to effect this, and I pro-
mise him faithfully to respect and treat him with
a great deal of Honour, though his performance
comes off never so short. But I foresee three In-
superable difficulties lie in his way ; first, that he
sees his Cause cannot bear it, for which he still
blames the Nature of the Thing. Next, that the
deep Study, or the most Learned Science of E-
legant Expressions so totally possesses his Mind,
it will not let *Logick* have any part in his
thought : And lastly, if it does, yet he may hap-
to meet there with some unelegant Terms of
Art which will quite fright him from his busi-
ness, and make him forswear the most evident
Truths in the world.

§ 9. But he hath only skirmish'd hitherto,
now he comes to close Dispute and will
prove that, take Faith how I will, he does not in
these words *vow* the possible falsehood of *Faith*,
and, that he may not fail to hit right on my
meaning of the word *Faith*, he divides the Text,
and

and gives us *many* Senses of that word, & those as ridiculous as he could imagine, which would make the unexamining Reader judg verily that I were out of my Wits to take the word [*Faith*] in such absurd meanings, and then hold it *Impossible to be False*. This done, he shews himself a most Victorious Conquerour and Confutes me powerfully from pag. 10. to pag. 13. At least, would not Dr. T's. best Friend, so he were but any thing Ingenuous, think he might safely swear that either he did not know what I meant by the word [*Faith*,] when I say *Faith is impossible to be False*, or else candidly acknowledge that he is strangely Insincere to counterfeit so many Imaginary Tenets, and then one by one confute them, Read them here from the middle of pag. 10. to pag. 12. and then reflect on my words found in my Introduction to *Faith Vindicated*, pag. 17- which are these :

To ask then if Faith can possibly be False, is to ask whether the Motives laid by Gods Providence for Mankind, or his Church to embrace Christian Faith, must be such as of their own Nature, cannot fail to conclude those Points True; and to affirm that Faith is not possible to be False, is equivalently to assert that those Motives, or the Rule of Faith, must be thus absolutely Conclusive, Firm, and Immoveable.

Hence is seen that I concern not my self in this Discourse with how perfectly, or imperfectly, divers Persons penetrate those Motives; or how they satisfy or dissatisfie some particular Persons; since

I only speak of the Nature of these Motives in themselves, and as laid in second Causes by Gods Providence, to light Mankind in their way to Faith. To which the dimness of Eye-sight, neglect to look at all, or looking the wrong way, even in many particular men, is Extrinsicall and Contingent.

Observe, Gentlemen, what exquisite Care I took to declare my meaning so perfectly, that the common regard to Readers, and his own Reputation, might restrain Dr. T. from imposing wilfully a wrong sense, to which habitual fault I knew he had otherwise most strong Inclinations: Observe next, that all his confute is wholly built on this known mistake. Hence his objecting the weak Understandings of some Believers; which is both forestall'd by the words now cited, declaring that I only speak of the *Motives to light Mankind or the Church to Faith, and what they are of their own Nature, or in themselves, not how perfectly or imperfectly others penetrate them*; besides I put this very Objection against my self (*Faith Vindicated, p. 166.*) and answer it; which he, never acknowledging it was mine, puts here as his own against me, without taking the least notice of my Answer there given. The last meaning he gives of the word *[Faith]*, which is the *Means and Motives to Faith*, is nearest to mine: But, because he leaves out the consideration of their being ordained by God for his Church, as all of what they are in their own Nature, or by virtue of the *Object*, and speaks

speaks of them only as in the worst Subject, viz. in weak Persons which penetrate them very little, he trifles wholly my Sense, and so impugns me not at all, but skirmishes with his own shadow. For, what kind of consequence is this, Sr. Austin says, *Some Persons are sav'd not by the quickness of their Understandings, but by the Simplicity of their Belief*. Therefore the Motives laid by God for Mankind, or his Church to embrace Faith, are possible to be False? As if the simplest could not, nay, were not most likely of all rather to believe upon weak and incompetent Motives, which therefore could never have been laid by God for his Church to embrace her Faith upon: Or, as if the most Simple that are, could not rationally believe the Church, and so become Infallible in their Assents by adhering to her, though their weak understandings do not penetrate or comprehend how the Church or themselves come to be so; nay, perhaps have not a clear sight of what the word [Infallible] means, till some Discourse awaken the apprehension of it in them.

§ 16. Having thus acted the Disputant, *Ex-ist Theologus, intrat Schola*, and pag. 13. 14. plays the old Tricks of *Legerdemain* over again; that is, leaves out half an Argument of mine, and plays upon the other half, with all the disingenuous craft, a wit bends that way could invent. In *Faith Vindicated*, pag. 89. and 90. I discours'd thus: The profound Mysteries of Faith will seem to a Heathen, *Impossible to be True*, there-fore

fore the Motives must (at least seem *Impossible to be False*, but Dr. T. confesses both Letter and Sence of Scripture (which are his *Rule of Faith*) *possible to be False*; nor (it being an Object proportion'd to humane Reason) is there any thing to make it *seem better* than it is, that is, to make it seem *Impossible to be False*; therefore, were there no better Grounds than his, it would be against all Reason to believe. Having view'd my Discourse, I desire the Reader to peruse the Answer here given by my Confuter : He names the word *Argument*, says two pretty words upon it, that 'tis *pleasant* and *surprising*; leaves out better half of it, conceals perfectly all that part of it which concludes strongly against his own insufficient Grounds; catches at a word, and would make my Discourse and Argument aim to prove Faith Impossible to be False, because the Motives are only *seemingly* such. Whereas every Page in that Book, and its whole Design shews I meant and prov'd them to be actually, really and *indeed* such. Had I a mind to evade such petty Cavils, I could alledg that both may *seem Impossible to be False*; yet one *more* seem so than the other : But the Truth is, advancing to confute him, I argu'd *ad hominem*, and contended that against a *seeming Impossibility to be True*, nothing but Motives *seemingly Impossible to be False*, can with any show of Reason be held convictive; but he had no Motives even *seemingly Impossible to be False*, but confessedly *Possible to be such*, therefore they had no imaginable show

show of Convictiveness. I grant then, 'tis a drawn Match (as he calls it) between equally-seeming Impossibilities; and because 'tis so, therefore a seeming Impossibility to be True, in the Object, is by much an overmatch to what's less than a seeming Impossibility to be False in the Motives, or Grounds; but, both Letter and Sense of Scripture, his Grounds of Faith, are confessedly possible to be otherwise, that is, False, and so are less than seemingly (even to himself) impossible to be False, therefore his Motives to believe are incomparably overmatcht by the difficulty of the Mysteries to be believed, and so there could be rationally, according to his Grounds, no Faith at all. This is my true Argument, which perhaps might be surprizing to him, which made him thus start aside from putting or answering it, though we may perceive by his carriage he esteems not it, and others such like, very pleasant. Indeed he still puts on a pleasant Look when he should be Sober; and is ever most Merry when it becomes him to be the most Serious; but this is long since understood to be a necessary Policy, not a Genuine effect of Nature. He tells us that Transubstantiation is evidently Impossible to be True: If so, then it implies some Contradiction; which if he shows me in any thing held of Faith by Catholics in that Point, I will become Dr. T's. Convert, and obedient Auditor. But, alas! How will he prove any thing to be a Contradiction? Since those Faulty Propositions are (as was prov'd Disc.

2. 3.) therefore *such*, because they are Opposite to Identical ones, or the First Principles, as hath been prov'd. Seeing then Dr. T. has long since renounc'd all those from being First Principles, for any thing I can discern he must either hold there are no Contradictions at all, or else (which comes to the same) hold that Contradictions are Truths.

§. 11. But he goes forwards again, in confuting a Point which no man living ever maintain'd, viz. that every single Christian must be Infallible; that is (as Dr. T. will needs take it) must so penetrate his Grounds, and what relates to them, as to see clearly he cannot be deceiv'd in judging his Grounds of Faith Conclusive; Whereas my Tenet is, that, let any man, though of the Acutest Understanding and greatest Learning that may be, entertain any Tenet as Faith on Reveal'd by God upon any other Motive than what God has left to his Church; this man, how ever thus Endow'd, not only may, but in likelihood will be deceiv'd; not for want of *Wits*, but for want of Grounds ascertaining, and infallibly engaging the Divine Revelation. On the other side let the Simplest and Weakest Understanding that is, happen to embrace Faith upon the Motives laid by God and left in his Church, he is Infallibly secure from being in an Error, not through the strength of his Understanding perfectly discerning and penetrating the Conclusive nature of his Grounds, but through the strength

Strength of those Grounds themselves, or of the
 Causes laid by Gods Providence, to plant and
 continue right Faith in the Church; by means
 of which what he has thus (more by the pecu-
 liar disposition of Gods gracious Providence,
 than any reach of his own Wit or Judgement)
 fortunately embrac'd, is preserv'd impossible to
 False, and consequently his Assent to it impossi-
 ble to be an Errour, because the *Churches Au-*
thority upon which he receiv'd it, is *Infallible*.
 And surely 'tis but fitting that all who believe
 upon that Rule God has left and commanded us
 to follow, should be thus secur'd from possibi-
 lity of Mistake: for, otherwise, since a Power
 is relative to its proper Act, what's possible to
 be False may *actually* be so, and so we might
 come to be led actually into Errour by obeying
 Gods Commands, which is impossible. To apply
 this: If Dr. T. therefore makes Scripture's
 Letter the Rule of Faith left by God for Man-
 kind to receive their Faith upon, and by doing
 so has commanded them to believe it, he must
 either say that its Sence and Letter (taking them
 as he builds his Faith on them) have no possibi-
 lity of Falshood, or (besides the many absur-
 dities already mentioned) grant that our All-
 wise and Good God can possibly lead men into
 actual Errour, nay command them to profess
 and die for a Ly, than which nothing can be
 imagin'd more blasphemous against Essential
Truth and Goodness.

Farther I declare 'tis my Tenet, that notwith-
 standing

standing this failure in some particulars, yet I hold that the Generality of the Faithful are so familiarly acquainted with the nature of Testifying Authority, as to know grossly and confusedly by means of Practical Self-evidence that 'tis a certain Rule to proceed upon; and thence either discern themselves, if they be very prudential, or else are capable to be made discern who proceed upon that Rule, who not: Hence also I hold that Tradition or Testifying Authority is the best provision that could be made for all Mankind to receive Faith upon, it being the most familiarly and most obviously knowable and penetrable by all sorts that can be imagin'd, and far more than Languages, Translations & Transcriptions, on which the Letter Rule depends. Lastly, I hold that what is thus practically self-evident, that is, known in gross and confusedly by the Vulgar, is demonstrable to the Learned, who scan with exact Art the nature of those Causes which wrought constantly that certifying Effect in the Generality, and find out according to what precisely they had that Certifying Virtue; which found, it will be the proper *Medium* to demonstrate the Certainty of that Authority by. This is my true Tenet, which my Prevaricating Adversary perpetually mistakes, because he *will* do it, and he therefore *will* do it, because it *must* be done. *In mala causa (as St. Austin sayes) non possunt aliter.*

§ 12. He goes about to argue *pag. 15.* from the *End of Faith*, and alledges that a *freedom* from seeing *just cause of doubting the Authority and Sense of Scripture*, may make one *believe, or really assent* to the *Doctrine of it, live accordingly and be saved*: By which I conceive he judges a *Christians* life consists in moving ones *Legs, Arms, or Hands*; for 'tis enough to stir us up to *External Action* that the motive be onely *Probable*; but, if a *Christian's* life be *Spiritual*, consisting in interior *Acts of the Understanding and Will*, as a *vigorous Hope*, and a *servent Love* of *unseen and unconceiveable Goods*, with other *Virtues* subservient to these, and all these depend on *Faith* as their *Basis*, and *Faith* depends for its *Truth* (which gives it all its *efficacie*) on the *Rule of Faith*, I doubt it will scarce suffice to work these *Effects* heartily, if *Learned men* speak out candidly, and tell the *Christians* they are to govern, that, notwithstanding all they can discern, they cannot see, absolutely speaking, that *Christian Faith* is a certain *Truth*, but only a *high likelihood, a more Credible Opinion, or a fair Probability*. It must therefore be beyond all these, and so impossible to be false. The main point then that *Dr. T.* ever misses in is this, that he still omits to state what certainty is due to *Christian Faith*, and its *Grounds per se loquendo*, or according to its own *Nature*, and the interior *Acts* it must produce, and the difficulties it must struggle through and overcome, even in the *Wise*st and *most Rational* persons, who are to be
fa-

satisfied of its verity, and so embrace it, and considers it perpetually according to what *per accidens*, that is, not Essentially belongs to it, but Accidentally may consist with it without utterly destroying its Nature, that is, he considers it not as found in those Subjects where it is in its true and perfect state, or freed from all alloy of Irrationality, but as in those where 'tis found most defectively and imperfectly, or, as it most deviates from its right nature. And this he is *forc'd* to do, because he sees that, should he treat of it as it ought to be, or according to what it would be by virtue of the Motives laid by the Giver of every perfect Gift, to bring mankind to Faith, singly and solely consider'd, without mingling the Imperfection of Creatures with his otherwise most powerful and wise Efficiency, the Grounds of Christian Faith must be able to subdue to a *hearty Assent* the most Learned and wisest portions of Mankind, which they could never do while they are seen by them to be *Possible to be False*.

§ 13. He argues that *Infallibility* is not necessary to the Nature of Faith, because this admits of Degrees, *that* (being the highest degree of Assent) of none: Besides, Infallibility is an absolute Impossibility of being deceived, and there are no degrees in absolute Impossibilities. I answer: that, let a thousand Intellectual Creatures, Angels or Men, know, and that Infallibly too, the *self-same Object*, yet they all know it

in *different degrees* of perfection, not by means of knowing *more* in the Object (for we will suppose it *one single point*) but *intensively*, or better on the *Subject's side*, because of the different perfection of their understanding Power penetrating more clearly the self-same Object. To conceive this better, let us reflect that the self-same thing may be corporally seen by several men, and each infallibly know what it is by means of this sight; yet because one of them has *better Eyes* than another, one sees *more clearly* what 'tis; the other *less*. Also, the Blessed Saints and Angels in Heaven differ from one another in glory; or, in greater and lesser degrees of the blissful Vision; that is, one sees the Divine Essence *better*, another *not so well*; yet the Object being *one Indivisible formality*, one cannot see *more* than another; wherefore their great degree of Glory consists in this, that one *penetrates* it *better*, and (as it were) sinks it deeper in the knowing Power than another does; which springs out of the several dispositions of the Subject, or the antecedent Love of God, which when 'tis greater, it more intimately and closely applies the Divine Object to the fervently-addicted Power. Again, on the Object's side there may be in some senses several degrees even of Absolute Impossibilities. First, because of the greater disproportion of the Object to the Power: As, put case it be Impossible that twenty men should lift such a weight, 'tis good sense to say, if *twenty men cannot* lift it, *much less* can

two: or, if *ten* men cannot possibly resist the
 force of *five hundred*, *thence* can they resist
ten thousand of equal strength. Next, because
 one of the *Impossible* depends upon *another*; and
 if be impossible the *Contradictory* should be *False*, the
more Impossible the *Premises* should be so; and
 yet more that the *very first Principles* themselves
 thus, 'tis impossible *2* and *3* should not make *4*.
 yet 'tis *more impossible* God, who is Self-existence
 should not be; because in these the later *Impossi-*
bility which depends on the former is *only* *im-*
possible by Consequence, (though still *absolutely*
such) that is, were not at all *Impossible*, if that
 which grounds it were not so. Whence 'tis
 seen, that unless Dr. T. will say that all Created
 Understandings are of the self-same pitch of Ex-
 cellence, he must say that, even supposing the
 self-same Object or Motive apt to assure Infalli-
 bly, one may better penetrate it, and so be more
 Infallibly Certain (on the Subject's side) than
 another. And this in the same Person his Faith
 may be come *more Evidently* than formerly, ac-
 cording as he renders it more Express to his
 Thoughts, and Better distill'd or Imprinted in
 them, which is done two manner of ways, *Ha-*
bitually, by often thinking on the Points, which
 way is Proper to the *Vulgar*; or *Knowingly*, by
 penetrating it's Grounds still better and better,
 and so making those Judgments *solid* and *firmer*.
 'Tis seen also that one Object may be justly said
 to be more Impossible to be false than another,
 because that other is not at all such, but by
 virtue

virtue of it, and dependence on it, according to that Axiom; *Quid per se est talis est magis tale. What is so of it self, is more (or more perfectly) such than what is such by means of another;* and with good reason, for being impossible to be false solely by dependence on another, is consequently, if it self possible to be false. Yet this Possibility can never be reduced into Act, because that Object or Truth is never found unconnected with that other on which it depends, but ever most intimately united with it, and so engaging it's verity.

§ 14. *Par. 18.* Dr. T. endeavours to acquaint us with the Notion of *Moral Certainty*, which I should be glad to learn, for I am not ashamed to own that I never understood it perfectly in my life; Some mean one thing by it, another means another thing, as their Fancy leads them; now I for my part declare that I have no distinct notion or knowledge of any thing that I cannot define, nor can I define that the limits or bounds of whose Nature I see not, nor, I am confident, any man living. I wish Dr. T. better success. *Moral Certainty* (says he) is sometimes taken for a high degree of Probability, which can only produce a doubtful Assent. He means I suppose, such an Assent as is a Doubt or Suspending of Assent, that is such an Assent as is no Assent; I wish Dr. T. would go to School a while to honest Dame Nature, and learn his *How-to* of First Principles, and not thus ever

and anon commit such bangers. To doubt signifies to fear a thing is not true, or not, not to dare to assent to it, that is, not to assent, and so a doubtful Assent, is not Assenting Assent, that is, an Assent which is not an Assent.

He proceeds, Yet it is also frequently us'd for a firm and undoubted Assent to a thing upon such Grounds as are fit fully to satisfy a prudent man. Here are many things worth remark if one had leasure: And first, what means an undoubted Assent? 'Tis the Thing, properly speaking, is undoubted, or not-doubted of, and not the Assent: But that's but a slip of word; I conceive by the word [yet] which introduces it, he means an undoubted Assent (onely he fear'd the Inelegancy of the word) in opposition to the doubtful Assent here spoken of; and, because (speaking properly) the opposit to Doubt is Hope, an Undoubted Assent means a Hopeful Assent; which, since Doubting speaks a Disinclining to assent or judge the thing so, and Hoping an inclining to it, very fairly gives us a second dish of an Assent which is no Assent; for Inclining only to be, is not being such, and so Inclining to Assent, how strong soever it be, is in reality no Assent. Well; Dr. T's resolution against Identical Propositions was certainly the most fatal bolt that ever was shot, making him discourse like the man that said he had three Lights in him, a great Light, a little Light, and no Light at all. Next, I would know what grounds are fully fit to satisfy a prudent man; On: man likes some Grounds, others

others like others: A sleight proof from Scripture likes some man better than the Practice of the Church, the Consent of Mankind, or the clearest Demonstration; another (I mean the Atheist) likes a plausible Reason that sues with and takes fancy better than all of them together: A third likes Nonsense prettily exprest better than the clearest Truths unelegantly deliver'd. A fourth values nothing that is produc'd to ground Assent but what, when examin'd, subsists by engaging First Principles, and bears the Test of right Logick; My Friend on the other side bids defiance to First Principles and Logick too, and is all for *Likelihoods, more Credible Proofs, Fair Probabilities, Doubtful or rather Hopeful Assents*. Yet there want not enow in the world, esteem'd sober Persons who judge all these to be *Prudent Men*. Where then is this *Prudent Man* that we may take measure of his pitch, and fit him with Grounds; for any thing yet appears 'tis as easie to fit the Moon with a Coat. There are many *prudent* men among the Protestants who judge the Scripture's Letter interpreted by private Wit is a competent Ground for Faith: There are other *prudent* men among Catholics, who judge the Contrary. Nay more there are questionless amongst Turks, and even Heathens divers men of great *Natural Prudence* (and we can only mean *such* a Prudence antecedently to the Illumination of Faith) and they too have Grounds fit fully to *satisfie* them, for they doe *actually* *satisfie* them, so that they see not the least

Reason to doubt of what they profess; and, so according to Dr. T's discourse these too have *moral Certainty* of what they hold. Wherefore, unless we could state what's meant by a *prudent man*, we can never come to understand what is meant by Dr. T's *moral Certainty*, nor consequently when Faith is Certain, when not: nay, which is worse, if *moral Certainty* be that which he appoints as sufficient for Faith; and for any thing appears by his words, Turks, Heathens, and all Hereticks have the same (since they have such Grounds as do fully satisfy *prudent men*) it will follow that they may have as good Grounds as Christians have; at least, that no man can tell who have right Grounds of Faith, who not, since this notion of [*what is fit fully to satisfy a Prudent man*] has no determinate limits to state the nature of this mock-Certainty. Besides, 'tis common in the course of the world, and I have divers times observ'd it my self, that two persons may contest about some passage, even in humane affairs, as when any thing is by a strange surpriz, or forgetfulness, lost or to seek; each of them may seriously protest they are *morally Certain* of it, each may alledge Reasons, they may be both *prudent men* too, and both be fully satisfy'd with their Reasons, and yet the plain discovery of the thing may shew afterwards that one of them prov'd to be in the wrong: Now, if this happen in a Controversie (for example) between a *prudent Socinian* and a *prudent Protestant*, how must it be decided? Both alledge Scripture, each

each sees no Reason to doubt of his own Interpretation, and both are fully satisfied, that is, both have Dr. T.'s *moral Certainty*, and so both must be in the right, if his Ground be in the right: that is, both sides of the Contradiction must be True, if Dr. T.'s Faith be True, built only on *moral Certainty*, which would utterly destroy his enemies *Identical Propositions*. I would gladly know, at least, why these two equally match *Moral Certainties* shall not make a drawn battle of it, or how it shall be determined on whose side the Certain Truth stands. I doubt it will be the hardest task that ever was, for him to make it even *morally Certain* there is a Trinity, for this cannot be done but by manifesting the Letter of Scripture, bears no shadow of Reason on the Socinians side; otherwise that seeming Reason may be a just cause for a Protestant to *suspend*, perhaps *doubt* of it, and so not be *morally Certain*.

§ 15. The meaning then of these words [*Moral Certainty*] being so Indeterminate: that Dr. T. himself cannot tell what to make of it, no wonder our Divines cannot agree about it: If he says he understands it very well, I desire to put it to the trial by producing any one Proposition held by him to be but *morally Certain*, and shew us Logically (Art being the Test of Nature) how or by virtue of what it's Terms hang together, or to make out according to his own notion of *Moral Certainty*, that not one *Prudent* man in

the world does; or can be satisfi'd with it. What I conceive is meant generally by Moral Certainty, is a high Probability or some great Likelihood, which being an insufficient Ground for Faith (for we are to profess and dy for the Truth of our Faith, and not for its Likelihood only) : I judge the name of it ought not to be heard when we speak of the Certainty due to Faith and its Grounds, unless it be signifi'd at the same time that 'tis us'd Catachrestically or abusively to mean *Absolute Certainty*.

§. 16. I expect D. T. will, instead of making out the nature of this Chimerical Certainty, run to Instances; for example, that of our being morally certain of the Sun's rising to-morrow, and such like. But, first I contend he is not Certain of this his own Instance: If he be, let him give his Grounds of Certainty for it, and go about to prove or conclude the night before that *it will*. I doubt much he will, when he comes to try it, find himself gravel'd; and confess with me that 'tis only *highly Likely*. 'Tis well he did not live in *Jashnah's* or *Ezekiah's* time, and tell them the day before that *Moses* his Law was only as Certain as that the Sun would not *stand still* or *go backwards* the next day; for, if so, I doubt much those who had heard and believ'd him, would have taken a just scandal at their Faith, seeing Points held equally Certain as it, prove actually False. Again, what more Certainty has he now of the Sun's rising again within 18 hours

hours after his setting, than they in those days were the day before that it would not go back, or stand still; and yet we see they were not Certain of it, for we know they had been mistaken in it, and that Judgment an Error. By which we see that Dr. T's moral Certainty means such a Certainty which (as appear'd by this Event) was Uncertain, or such a Certainty as was Certain per adventure. Now this nonsense has no harm in it but that it is opposite to an Identical Proposition [*What's Certain is Certain*] which weighs not with Dr. T. who has renounc'd all First Principles. In a word, our B. Saviour has beforehand prevented all such Instances; by telling us that *Heaven and Earth shall fail, but his Words shall not fail*: intimating that the whole Fabrick of the World (much more some one great part of it) is tottering and unstable in comparison of the unchangeable nature of Truth, and such all good Christians are to profess their Faith, and be ready to dy to attest it.

§ 17. Having thus done more than Miracle, and establish'd **MORAL CERTAINTY** which were not its self were it not unestablish'd, he proceeds (p. 18.) to overthrow *Infallibility*: alledging that the *Understanding* cannot be absolutely secur'd from all possibility of mistake, but *hitherto* by the perfection of its own nature (which he thinks all Mankind but Mr. S. have hitherto granted that it could not) or, by supernatural Assistance. I desire he would not stretch my Tenet beyond the bounds my self give it: I never

ver said that Human Understandings could not
 possibly be mistaken in *any thing* at all, but only
 in Knowledges built on Sensations, in Knowing
 the Truth of First Principles, in Knowing
 (while left to Nature, till Speculation, for which
 they are too weak, put them into a puzzle) by
 Practical Self-evidence *confusely* and in *common*
 something belonging to some natures dany con-
 versit with; and lastly, some Learned men in di-
 verse deductions of Evident Reason, for exam-
 ple, in diverse Propositions in *Austia*. But, that
 which our Subject restrains it to (being about
 the Infallible Conveyance down of Faith) is the
 First of those, *viz.* Infallibility of our Sen-
 sations; for, once putting this, Tradition is an In-
 fallible Rule, Speaking then of this (which is
 all my present purpose requires) I am so far from
 being the only man who holds it, that Dr. T. (ex-
 cepting Scepticks, if perhaps he be not one of that
 Sect) is I think the only man that ever *deny'd* it:
 Are not both of us infallibly certain that we Eat,
 Drink, Write, and Live; or did any but a mad-
 man ever think seriously that sober Mankind
 (abstracting from Disease in some particulars)
 might possibly be deceiv'd in such Knowledges as
 these? Are not our Senses contriv'd naturally,
 as apt to convey Impressions from the Objects to
 the Knowing Power (I speak not of the differ-
 ent *degrees* of perfection necessarily annex to
 each, but as to the main so as to be sufficient for
 use and needful Speculation) as any other Cau-
 ses in Nature are to do their proper Effects? Have
 they

they not also as little Contingency in them, and that Contingency as easily discoverable by the Standard of circumstant Mankind with whom they converse, as in Ictericall Persons and such like? This being so, I affirm that the *Basis* on which our Rule of Faith is built (*viz. Natural Knowledge*) is more secure than any part of Nature; since naturally 'tis Impossible Mankind can err in these; and, whereas we are not Certain but it may, in some Conjunction, become God's Infinite Wisdom and Goodness to exert his Divine Omnipotence, and alter the course of Nature even in considerable portions of it, as in the Instances given of the Sun's standing still and going back, the Universal Deluge, and such like; yet in our case 'tis Impossible; because the altering Nature's course in such as these were directly to create False Judgments or Error in Mankind; of which 'tis Impossible Essential Wisdom, Goodness, and Truth, should be the Immediate and peculiar Cause. *Naturally* therefore it cannot happen, nor yet *Supernaturally*; For though taking the proportion between Gods Omnipotence, singly considered, and the Object, 'tis possible or within the compass of Gods power to make all Mankind err; yet taking in his other Attributes which determin his Omnipotence to do only what's Wise and Good, and according to Truth, *it cannot be* God should either *will* or *do* it, and so it cannot be effectively done at all.

§ 18. He objects that the Church of Rome challenges Infallibility upon no other account but that of Supernatural Assistance: I answer, the Church had her Rule of Faith left to her hand by Jesus Christ who founded and constituted her, and found it not out by Speculative Reason: Whences 'tis not the proper Concern of a Church to discourse very particularly about the manner and nature of the Rule of Faith, but of Speculative Divines who look into the nature of things, and there find the Reasons of those Truths God has barely told us. Next, 'tis only of Faith that Christ has promis'd to assist his Church, but whether supernaturally only, or also by Natural means is no where defin'd, my Tenet is that he assists his Church both ways, as I at large defend in *Surefooting*, and that the best strength of Nature and Grace are both of them exerted to their utmost, to ascertain the Infallible Authority on whose Testimony we receive our Faith: But, with this difference, that the Supernatural Assistance exceedingly comforts Faith in those who are True Believers already; and the Natural Assistance (as far as concerns the due Satisfaction of Reason) informs the Understanding of those who yet discern no Supernaturality at all in the Church, and have nothing but their Natural Reason to guide themselves by: without which I see not how either a Circle is avoidable, or rational Satisfaction to such men possible: for were not a Natural Assistance admitted to introduce the knowledge of the other, Super-

Supernaturals would be the way to Supernaturals, and Faith the means to arrive at Faith, which would confound the *Means* with the *End*. I wish Dr. T. would leave off this new way of confusing, by telling me still I am the *only man*, or *first man*, that *said* (he should have said, *prov'd*) such or such a thing; which cavil, if he answer not my Argument (as he seldom thinks of that duty), signifies either nothing at all, or else a high Commendation to me as *improving* Knowledge to some degree. But more of this point when I come to defend my *Method*.

§ 19. Hitherto then Dr. T. has given us no Absolute Certainty (either of the Existence of a Deity, or) of Christian Faith, as far as it depends on the Letter of Scripture, but onely such *miscall'd* Certainty as means *Uncertainty*, whence his pretended Certainty of its Sense falls to the Ground: But let us see how he vindicates the Certainty of Faith (and himself not to hold it possible to be false) by *ascertaining* at least the *Sense* of it, supposing the *Letter* were right. He tells us pag. 20. That *as for the Sense of Books 'tis plainly impossible any thing should be delivered in such clear and Certain words as are absolutely incapable of any other Sense*: And what's the natural Sequel of this appl'd to Scripture, but that *'tis plainly Impossible Faith, built on that Sense, or rather which is that Sense, should not be possible to be False*, and consequently the *Letter* can never be a competent Rule of Faith: where-

as in this way of conveying it down by Living
 Voice and Practice of the Church; that is, by Ca-
 techizing, publick Preaching, private Discour-
 sing, & converse Living, 'tis made so manifest to
 the Generality what was held in each year imme-
 diately before; that no prejudice can mislead
 them all so much as either to mistake or misrep-
 resent it; as 'tis, for Example in England, for the
 Generality of Protestants to err, or impose this
 this year upon the Belief of England, that last
 year they held and practis'd Prayer for the Dead
 or assisting at the Christian Sacrifice. By which
 'twill be easily seen; whether of us two
 makes better provision for the Certainty of
 Faith. He proceeds. *For notwithstanding this,*
the meaning of them may be so plain, as that any un-
prejudic'd and reasonable man may certainly under-
stand them. Let him apply this to Scripture, & the
 discourse stands thus, *All men are unreasonable and*
prejudic'd who take not Scripture in my sense. If
 this be not the meaning of his words, let him tell
 us by what other Maxims he guides himself in
 judging who are such; when he tells us *any un-*
prejudic'd and reasonable man may certainly under-
stand the Sense of Scripture. If he can assign no
 other reason of those mens Faults, but their
 disagreeing with him in the meaning of Scrip-
 ture, I doubt his Readers will scarce believe him
 that all Socinians and other Sects, who differ
 from him in main Points, are Passionate and Pre-
 judic'd. If an indifferent man stood by while D. T.
 and a Socinian disputed, and heard one of them
 tire

one place after place, compare one place to another, and use all the means he could to make out the right sense of the words; and the other use the self-same Method, and yet nothing concluded decisively (as it never was in this way of managing disputes) I fear he would be little the nearer instruction and embracing Dr. Tetter, upon his saying that his Adversary was passionate and prejudic'd. He parallels the Certainty of Scripture Sense to that of Euclids Definitions and Axioms; in the sense of which men are universally agreed, and think themselves undoubtedly Certain of it; and yet the words in which they are express may possibly bear another sense. He trifles; Let him show me the Generality of Scripturists as unanimously agreeing in the sense of Scripture, as Geometrists do in those Axioms and Definitions; or let him leave of bringing such disagreeing Parallels, importing that there are not men of all Sides and Sects as willing to see Truth in things belonging to their eternal Salvation; as to see the Truth in Mathematicks. How many Interpretations are there of [This is my Body] and of those many Texts which signify Christ to be true God: Both of main Concern, the understanding them wrong, being on one side Idolatry, on the other Blasphemy. Yet we have Eminent Learned men, Acute Wits, Excellent Linguists, Good Logicians and Historians, and lastly, very great Scripturists who compare place to place; yet, all this notwithstanding, nothing is decided finally; still they

they Debate, Write, Quote, Interpret, and will do, while this Method is taken, to the Worlds End. Does Dr. T. find such a disagreement amongst men Learned in the Mathematicks, in the understanding the Axioms and Definitions of *Euclid*? Add, that those men in other matters are not *Passionate* or *Prejudic'd*, but are held Prudent and Sober by great portions of Mankind, nor do they lose their Repute amongst Indifferent Judges as renouncing their Manhood or perfectly deserting Reason; that is, they are not held Madmen for not adhering to such a determinate Sense of those places: which argues evidently, that they renounce not Evidence; and that the Scriptures Letter, thus manag'd, is not apt to ascertain them at all, and so *no Rule*. Yet he gives us one great Reason (as he calls it) why men do not agree in the Sense of Scripture as well as in the others, because their Interests, and Lusts, and Passions are more concern'd. So that according to Dr. T. a man who is to be guided by his Pastors and Teachers cannot be Certain of the Sense of Scripture, nor consequently of Faith, unless he can look into the hearts of men (which is proper to God alone) and discern who are *Passionate*, *prejudic'd*, *Interessed*, and *Lustful*. Again, this Reason is found on either side to a great degree, for were not those Axioms and Definitions so Evident that absurd men would incur the shame of Mankind to deny them, there wants no temptation of Interest and passion to make Authors go about to control and contradict the Writings
of

of others to gain themselves applause and credit. But, if this be *one great Reason* of disagreement in the Sense of Scripture, I would gladly know, what are *the other great Reasons*. But of these we hear nothing: and there is good Reason why; for since his *one great Reason* is the ill-disposedness of the *persons*, the *other great Reason* must be the defectiveness of the *Thing*, that is, the Inability of Scripture's Letter, by reason of its Inevidence to private Understandings, to make them agree in *one Sense* of it; which manifestly makes it unfit to be a *Rule of Faith*.

§ 20. To Conclude, the Summe of Dr. T's Vindication of himself from making according to his Grounds, *Faith possible to be False*, amounts to this; He produces words to disprove it, which manifoldly confess it; he endeavours all along to shew that Infallible Certainty cannot be had, of either Scripture's *Letter* or *Sense*; that is, he grants, that the whole world may be deceiv'd (though all the Causes be put to secure them) in the Ground of Faith; or denies that absolutely speaking, Faith is Certainly-True. Again, loath to speak out to that point candidly, he shuffles about, and puts upon his Adversary divers odd and ridiculous acceptions of the word [*Faith*] omitting the right one, which was given to his hand, Lastly, being to give account what kind of Certainty he allow'd to Faith; he gives such a Notion of it as signifies nothing, and has all the Marks of *Uncertainty* imaginable;

taking his measure of Certainty, which ought to proceed from the *Object*, or Proof, from the *Subject's* persuasion or adhesion to it; which common Experience testifies, may indifferently be found in Truths and Falshoods, and Common sense confutes; Nature telling every man that my *Assent* is not therefore *Certain*, because *I* do not doubt it, *see not the least cause of doubt*, am fully persuaded, and verily think so; but because the *Thing* is seen indeed to be so, or because the Proof is *Conclusive*. Either then let him bring such Proofs, and own and shew them to be such, or he leaves his Cause in the lurch, and his Credit (which he is here defending) unclear'd; by yielding Faith possible to be absolutely False; that is, for any thing any man living knows, actually such.

DISCOURSE VII.

*In what manner Dr. T. replies to FAITH
VINDICATED.*

§ I. **D**R. T. has no Fellow, nor his way of Confute any parallel. Not to provoke the peevishness of malice too far, and yet follow home my blow more fully, and yet withal to uphold the Efficacie of Faith grounded on the just Conceit of its Absolute Certainty; Iwrita

a Book, call'd *Faith Vindicated*, in behalf of Christian Faith in Common, shewing the absolute Certainty or Security from Error of that kind of Assent, provided it be grounded on those Motives God had left to settle his Church, and, by it, Mankind in Faith, as I declared my self in my *Introduction*: It pretended Demonstration from the beginning to the end, and had not one drollish or unsober expression in it: Take a Map of it in a few words. I conceiv'd my self debtor both *Sapientibus* and *Insapientibus*, and hence the Concern being common to all Christians, amongst the rest to Speculative Divines, I resolv'd to prove it by Arguments sutable to every Capacity. To the more Intelligent, to the end of the Third Eviction: to the Middle or Prudential sort, to the end of the Fifth: and to them of the lowest Capacity in the last: every one being enabled by Tradition or Education to comprehend what the *common Language and Practice of Christianity* teaches them, as to Speeches and Carriages appertaining to Faith. I begun (after I had put two *Postulatum* granted by all Christians) with Logical Arguments; which I pursu'd at large, because as 'tis a common Trick in Sophisters and half Logicians, to abuse that Excellent Art to elude the clearest Evidences, so it became a more necessary Duty in me to prevent by the closest Proofs, fetch't from almost all Heads imaginable that belong'd to that skill, any misusages of its Maxims to patronize Falshood. This could be no other than very Spec-

culative, and accordingly I declar'd in my Introduction, what my Reader was to expect, in Discourses of that kind; nor will any man indu'd with common Sense wonder, that I should use Logical Expressions when I make Logical Discourses, or Terms of Art when I speak to Scholars. These things reflected on, let us see now what a dextrous way our Learned Confuter takes to answer that whole Book, (for he manifests here an intention to give it no other) and to overthrow so many Demonstrations.

§ 2. His first way of Confute is, to pick out a leaf or two of the most Speculative part of that Treatise, only intended for Scholars, and apply it to the Understandings of those who are onely Sermon-pitch: to whom, because such Discourses are unfutable, and withal too hard for him to answer, hence he very politickly both gratifies the Fancies of those Readers, and avoids himself the difficult task of answering the pressing Reason in it, by playing the Wit, when 'twas dangerous to act the Scholar, and making use of his constant Friend at a dead list, *Drollery*, instead of relying on the Patronage of Reason, which (as he experiences) so often betrays and exposes his weakness. He runs on therefore a whole leaf or two in this jovial Career ere he can recover himself, till even his own Friends who are not aware of the necessity, admire at his endless Raillety; and, true to his Method, neglects wholly the Sense, and excepts mightily against

gainst five or six hard words; namely, *potentiality*, *actuality*, *actuation*, *determinative*, *supervene*, and *subsume*; which, it seems puzzle him exceedingly; for he professes to think them *Mystical*. He calls the Discourse *Jargon*, *Foo*l-*ish* and *Nonsense* (which two last words he is ever most free of, when his Reason is most at a loss.) He likens it to the *Coptick* and *Slavonian Language*, talks of *Astrology*, *Palmistry*, *Chymistry*, and what not? and with such kind of stuff confutes it most unmercifully even to utter desolation.

§. 3. In return to which kind of carriage, (though it deserves only contempt) let us hear first how Dr. T. answers himself; who (Serm. pag. 120. 121.) very zealously reprehends and preaches against this absurd Fault in himself, in these words. *Let none (sayes he) think the worse of Religion [or those Reasons which oblige us to profess 'tis absolutely-True] because some are so bold, to despise and deride. For, 'tis no disparagement to any person or thing to be laugh'd at, but to deserve to be so. The most grave and serious matters in the whole world are liable to be abus'd — Nothing is so excellent, but a man may fasten upon it something or other, belonging to it, whereby to traduce it. A sharp wit may find something in the wisest man, whereby to expose him to the contempt of Injudicious people. The gravest Book that ever was written, may be made ridiculous by applying the sayings of it to a foolish purpose; For a jest may be obscur'd upon any thing. And*

therefore no man ought to have the less Reverence for the Principles of Religion [of those Reasons which oblige us to hold and profess Faith absolutely-True] because idle and prophane WITS [nonplust Controvertists] can BREAK & ESTS upon them. Nothing is so easie [Dr. T. knows that by long and very useful Experience] as to take PARTICULAR PHRASES and EXPRESSIONS out of the best Book in the world; and to abuse them by forcing an odd and ridiculous Sense upon them. But no wise man will think a good Book FOOLISH for this Reason; but the MAN that abuses it. Nor will he esteem that to which every thing is liable to be a JUST Exception against any thing. At this rate we must despise ALL things. But, surely, the better and shorter way is to condemn THOSE who would bring any thing that is worthy into Contempt. Also in his foregoing Sermon, pag. 86, 87. he gives good Doctrine to the same purpose; but never intended to follow it himself. These things [whether Faith be absolutely true or no] are of Infinite consequence to us, and therefore ——— is not a matter to be slightly and superficially thought upon, much less (AS THE WAY OF ATHEISTICAL MEN IS) to be PLAID and ESTED nichal. If any one shall turn Religion (or a Discourse aiming to shew it absolutely Certain) into Railery, and think to CONFUTE it by two or three BOLD TESTS, this man doth not render IT, but HIMSELF Ridiculous.

culous. Again, *Though the Principles of Religion* (or the Proofs of Faith's absolute Certainty) were never so clear and evident, yet they may be made *RIDICULOUS* by *VAIN* and *FROTHY MEN*; as the gravest and wisest personage in the world may be abus'd by being put into a Fools Coat, and the most Noble and excellent Poem may be debas'd and made vile by being turn'd into *BURLESQUE*. Thus Dr, T. by Preaching what he never intended to Practice has most amply laid open his own Folly, and hits himself still, while he aims at the Atheist: and no wonder, for their Causes (as far as I impugn him here) are not very wide of one another; since nothing approaches nearer to the denying all Religion than to hold it all Uncertain. At least I would gladly know of him in what his way of Discourse here against my Reasons for the Absolute Certainty of Faith differs from that of Atheists against a Deity, and all Religion. The Points to be considered by both of them are of a solid and concerning Nature, and both handle them drollishly, and make Raillery supply the place of Reason. Nor will it avail him to reply that my Proofs were not solid, and so ought to be confuted with mockery; For he ought first shew by reason that they thus highly misdeserve, and then employ his Talent of Irony upon them afterwards; and not make meer Irony supply the place of Reason. Besides, himself acknowledges pag 87. that, *If the Principles of Religion were doubtful*

and Uncertain; yet this concerns us so nearly that we ought to be serious in the Examination of them. And, certainly, no judicious or good man will doubt, but that it highly and nearly concerns all good Christians to know, whether their Faith, the Substance of all their Hope, particularly the Existence of a Trinity and Incarnation, the Points I mention'd, be absolutely Certain or not. I leave it to the choice of Dr. T's Friends whether they will rather approve his *Dollrine* in his *Sermons*, or his unconsonant *Practice* in this *Preface*. If the former, they must condemn him out of his own mouth to be Foolish, Ridiculous, and an Imitator of *Atheists*, and his way of writing *Insignificant*. But, if they like the Latter, then they must conclude his *Sermons* as equally blame-worthy for opposing so laudable a *Practice*. Unfortunate man, who very gravely takes *Texts* against *Scoffers*, and makes *Sermons* upon them; and then behaves himself all over so *Scurrilously* and *Drollishly* in his whole *Preface* to them, as levels those very *Sermons* as directly against himself, as could possibly be contriv'd or imagin'd: Which is in effect by his carriage, to tell the *Atheist*, that that *Scoffing* and *Drollish* way of answering and managing *Discourses* without Religion, which is so horrid sin in them because they are of the *Ungodly* and *Wicked*, is notwithstanding none at all but a very great *Virtue* in the *Saints* and the *Godly*; and in a particular manner *Meritorious* so it be practis'd against these *Men of sin*, the most abhominable *Papists*.

§. 4. Besides, as Dr. T. well observed when he was in a more sober humour, *Everything, even the best, is liable to be abus'd and made ridiculous by drollish jests*, and consequently this Method he so exactly observs when he is to confute me, will (as he very well expresses it in his Pref. pag. 26) *equally serve to prove or confute any thing*. To shew the all-powerful strength and virtue of it, let us imagine that Euclid, had been a Catholick, Dr. T. might have preach't a Sermon or two full of zeal against Witchcraft, and have produc't some *Fair Probabilities* to perswade the people that Mathematicians were all meer *Frier Bacons*, and absolute Conjurers, because they use to draw Circles and uncouth Figures which look like Magick (to second which Dr. S.'s. Book concerning Images, would (*monstris mutandis*) light very pat and home) and then when he had done, writ a Preface to those Sermons against the Prince of Conjurers, or the *Belzebub* of those Incarnate Devils, *Euclid*, and confute him on this manner. First he might pick out some Demonstrations of his in which were five or six words harder than ordinary (at least too hard for the Vulgar, though clear enough to the Learned men in that Art) as *Isoceles*, *Parallelograms*, *Parallelepype*, *Cylinder*, *Diameter*, *Eicosadron*, and such like; and when he had transcrib'd them into a Ridiculous Preface which he was sure no good Mathematicians would ever care to read, but vulgar Souls would much admire, and out of their hatred to these

Popish

Popish Conjurers, cry up: He might proceed to confute him on this manner. *I have here* (Reader) *presented thee with a discourse, which, if we may believe Euclid is mathematically demonstrable. A rare sight indeed! Certainly, the sacred names of Principles and Demonstrations were never so prophane'd by any man before. Might not any one write a Book of such Jargon and call it Demonstration? — If he intended this stuff for satisfaction of the people (as it seem'd by his writing it in Greek, the vulgar Tongue, he did) he might as well have writ it in the Coptick or Sclavonian Language. Yet I cannot deny but this is very sutable to the Principles of the Roman Church, For why should not their Science as well as their Service be in an unknown Tongue? — Certainly his Talent does not lie for Science. — Learned men are less apt to admire Nonsense than the common people — Neither Harphius, nor Rusbrochius, (Dr. Faustus, Frier Bungy) nor the profound Mother Juliana (or Mother Shipton) ever spoke anything (charme) more senseless and obscure. — He hath a style peculiarly fitted for Mysticks (Magick) For even in this parcel of stuff there are five or six words (such as Isosceles, Patallelograms, Parallelepiped, Diameter, Cylinder, Eicasaedron) which if they were but well mingled and discreetly ordered would half set up a man in that way, and enable him to write us Mystical (Magical) a Discourse as any man (or the Devil himself) would wish. Thus, Reader, thou seest how true 'tis that Dr. T's method of Talking is none; since I dare undertake*

take that let him and his Fellow-Conspirators, in malice against Catholicks but resolve to Preach and Write as earnestly that *Mathematicians* are *Conjurors*, as they do that *Catholicks* are *Idolaters*, (which, of the two, is the far easier to prove,) and the Method he observes in this Preface of his, would equally serve to confute *Euclid* as it does *me*. And the like force it would have against any Logical, Metaphysical, Natural, Medicinal, Rhetorical, Poetical, or even Grammatical Discourse: Each have their Terms of Art proper to themselves, which look odd and uncouth to the Vulgar; and so are equally liable to be abus'd and rendred ridiculous, to men whose practice is to read Sermons.

§. 5. But can Dr. T. seriously think these words to be indeed so hard as he pretends? The word [*Potential*] was familiar to us both when we were in our *Accidence* and talk of the *Potential Mood*; Also [*Actual*] and *determin* are very obvious; I suppose then 'tis their ending in those common Terminations [*ry*] [*tion*] and [*tion*] which makes *potentiality*, *actuality*, *actuation*, and *determinative* so insuperably hard. As for *Supervene* and *Subsume*, it may justly be wondred whether the difficulty lies in knowing what's the signification of the Verbs *Venio* and *Sumo*, or the Prepositions *Super* and *Sub*. But he means they are not *trim* and *Elegant* enough: Alas, good Gentleman! I doubt there are some who complain of the Tenderneſs of their Ears, when

when the true Reason is the Softness of their Heads. But enough of this.

§ 6. Let us now proceed to examine the true force of one of these Demonstrations which he most opposes with Drollery; we shall see that it was both his concern to answer it, and withal Impossible he should, which joyn'd, no wonder he endeavour'd to evade thus, it being the best Shift he had. All Logicians know that the Respondent by bringing a pertinent *distinction*, evades granting the whole Proposition and is li- cenc't to admit it but *in part*; that is, indeed, to deny the former Proposition as it stood under an undistinguish'd manner of expression. Also, that amongst Human Notions some are more po- tential, that is more General than others, and that those General Notions are divided or distin- guish'd into more-particular ones by certain In- teriour notions Adjectively express'd, call'd *Differences*. 'Tis Evident likewise that, since 'tis Impossible there should be a Horse or a Man in Common, only Individuals can exist, that is, only these have a Capacity or Power to Existence, and consequently that Existence is related to them as their proper Act. All determining notions therefore that can belong to any nature, or to that which has such a Nature in it or the Thing, are presuppos'd to Existence, and so it can admit no further Determination, or any Differences, and consequently, the Predicate [*Existent*] can never be pertinently distinguish'd; wherefore, it being Impossible to distinguish the Capula, in
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case the Subject can be distinguished as little as the other (which I there prov'd) it must follow that those Propositions which have in them *such* a Predicate must be admitted in their whole Latitude, and simply as the words lie. Seeing then Christians are bound to profess their Faith *True* as to those Points of a *Trinity* (for example) or *Incarnation*, or that a *Trinity* or *Incarnation* *Exist*, and the Predicate *Existent*, can bear no Distinction dividing its simplest notion, such as are *morally*, *hopefully*, in *great Likelihood*, or such dwindling kind of Sceptical or half-Atheistical expressions, it follows that it must be *affirm'd* and *held* that a *Trinity*, or *Incarnation* absolutely *is*, and, consequently, that 'tis *impossible not to be*; whence follows that, it being Blasphemy to say that God has made a rational Nature, or a Nature to assent upon *motives*, and then commanded it to be *not-rational*, that is to assent *beyond the Motive*, which is (as to that degree of Assent which is *beyond*) *without* a Motive, we must conclude that, however Created understandings fall short in penetrating them, or Miscarry in discoursing them, the Grounds of our holding *thus*, as laid by God, must be *absolutely Conclusive*, or *impossible not to conclude* the thing is; and not only *morally Conclusive*, *morally Certain*, *great Likelihoods*, *Fair Probabilities*, *freeing only from Actual doubt*, and such like. Wherefore if Dr. T. would approve himself worthy to Write or Discourse concerning the Grounds of Faith, he ought to profess
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and produce *such*, since nothing else reaches the nature of Faith, or can rationally ground the the Obligation impos'd by God himself, of professing and holding that the Thing absolutely *is*: But he was conscious to himself he had none *such*, or absolutely Conclusive, therefore he was forc'd to play the Droll and mock at the close Reasons that would oblige him to it, instead of answering them.

§. 7. This is the Argument which our great Divine, who is still most merry when he should be most serious, likens to Astrology, Palmistry and Chymistry; and sayes that Arguments from these *could not have been more ridiculous than to argue that what is True, is Imprssible to be False from the Nature of Subject, Predicate, and Copula: For (sayes he) be the Propositions True or False; these are of the same Nature in both; that is, they are Subject, Predicate, and Copula.* Which learned Answer is built on two manifest Falsifications of that whole Discourse. One that I am meerly proving or concluding there, that *what is True is Impossible to be False*; whereas my ultimate Intent in the former Proof (as put down by himself here, pag. 24.) is to conclude it *Impossible* that *THESE* Points of Faith should be False; that is, *SUCH* points as express only the Anest of a thing, and so have for their Predicate *Existent*, as I exprest my self in that Argument. And my Conclusion of the 2d. Proof is this as put down by himself here, pag. 25. *'Tis impossible therefore that what is thus affirm'd*

affirm'd to be True (that is in such words as can bear no pertinent distinction) *should* in any regard *be affirm'd possible to be False*; the impossibility of distinguishing the Predicate pertinently, excluding here all possibility of diverse respects. Is this barely to go about to prove that *what's True is Impossible to be False*, or rather, that no different regards or respects can in such Faith-propositions as these be made use of to elude or diminish the granting their *Intire Truth*. The Proposition [*An Ethiopian is black*] is but in part True, because it can bear diverse respects or regards to distinguish it pertinently; viz. according to his *Teeth*, and his *Skin*: But in those Propositions which have [*Existent*] for their predicate, no imaginable regards can be found applicable to it, so to distinguish it pertinently. The next Falsification of my Intention is to pretend that I argue barely out of the nature of *Subject*, *Copula*, and *Predicate*, whereas by my whole Discourse, 'tis most evident that I argue precisely from their being *such Subjects* and *Predicates*, that is such as could bear no pertinent Distinction diminishing the *Integrity* of their *Truth*. In a word, the Question was about the *Truth*, or which is all one *Impossibility of Falshood* in Faith-Propositions, and I was there treating it Logically; I would gladly then have any sober and Intelligent man inform me, why it was not as proper and pertinent for me to argue out of the nature of *Propositions* (in which only *Truth* is found) and particularly out of the nature of *such Propositions*,

positions, that is, those who have *such Subjects & such Predicates* in them, as it is for a Mathematician writing a Discourse of Trigonometry to argue out of the nature of *such a kind of Angle, or a Triangular Figure* &c. Or why in so doing I can justly be thought to have deflected from the Rules or Method of exactest Art.

§. 8. In a word, had I in a *Christian English Sermon* stood very gravely repeating Sixteen verses out of a *Heathenish Latin Poet*; or had I, after I had so often mock't at others for *humbug Rhetorick*, and so, indirectly extoll'd my self for my *smooth style*, talk of persons of a *PROFLIGATE TEMPER*, as did Dr. T. here, pag. 33. and pag. 163. Some idle Wit, who had nothing else to do might perhaps have taken just occasion to sport himself with my imperfection. But, to mock at a Writer for using the Terms proper to the Art he is discoursing in, seems to argue a very *Profligate temper* of Levity at least, that I may say no worse.

§. 9. Thus much for his first Answer to *Faith Vindicated*, consisting wholly of Drollery, Neglects and other worse Faults, His second is, that the main of that Book being to prove that *what's True is Impossible to be False*, I oppose no body that he knows of, in this matter. I answer, whoever pleases to run over the several Heads from which I argue in *Faith Vindicated*, hinted briefly in the Margent, will see that that which he pretends in a manner the only point, is but once designedly made use of, and very rarely toucht at in other places.

places; and that there are near forty Proofs of another nature, though sometimes (all Truths being connected) they happen to be partly coincident into the same. Sometimes also I *suppose* it, but it bears no show of reason that most of my Book is spent in proving it. But is it so clear that I *oppose* no body he knows of in proving that what is True, is Impossible to be False? Does not he know one Dr. T. ? That same person, I suppose, will tell us soberly that he can prove his Faith True, relying on what he conceives to be the Letter and Sense of Scripture, and yet, speaking of the Certainty he had of both these, he told us expressly (*Rule of Faith*, pag. 118.) *All this may possibly be otherwise*; that is, that possibly he has neither right Letter nor right Sense of Scripture, and consequently that what he affirms to be his Faith and True, is notwithstanding Possible to be False. The same man being to vindicate himself in this Pref. pag. 10. explain'd his meaning to be, that he could not demonstrate those things so as to shew that the Contrary necessarily involves a Contradiction: Now, if he cannot prove that the Contrary to any thing involves a Contradiction, he can never prove that contrary to be False (nothing being False which clashes not by consequence at least with some First Principle, or involves a Contradiction) and as long as he cannot prove it False, 'tis possible to be True for any thing he knows; and, if the Contrary to Faith be affirm'd possible to be True, Faith it self must be possible to be False;

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and yet, though his disorders make it *Possible to be False*, the obligation incumbent on him as a Christian, forces him to affirm that 'tis notwithstanding *True*. So that the Goodness of Christianity joyn'd with the Badness of his Grounds, oblige him to grant equivalently, though he be wariſer than to do it directly, that *what is True is poſſible to be False*.

§. 110. Now, becauſe 'tis againſt the very grain of Rational nature to admit of ſuch a palpable Contradiction, if the word *Truth* be rightly and properly underſtood; hence I am Certain he and ſuch as he are provided with a diſtinction at the bottom of their hearts, and only hold that their Faith is *morally True*, that is, ſome great *Likelihood*; or as *True* as many things are of which we judge our ſelves *morally Certain*, and did not in the leaſt doubt of them, yet oftentimes, upon clearer Information, have found our ſelves deceiv'd in our Opinion of them, and the Thing to be *False*. And, that this is Dr. T's ſentiment in this matter, appears farther (beſides what hath been now ſaid) from his owning ſuch a moral Certainty only for the Grounds of his Faith, as frees one from doubt, from his feeble and dwindling Expreſſions of his Certainty of a Godhead; and, laſtly, from his blaming me, pag. 29. for reſting contented with no leſs Certain Grounds than ſuch as are *abſolutely Concluſive* of the thing. And, how one who relies on his Speculative Proofs (for the Renouncers of Tradition can have no claim

to Practical Self-evidence) can be thought to hold Faith *absolutely True*, and yet disclaim himself and blame in others the pretending to such Motives as *absolutely conclude* or *prove* it to be *True*, or how a man can with honesty affirm a thing is *absolutely True*, and yet deny he is *absolutely Certain* of it, I must confess both passes my Imagination, and I am confident every man's living who considers well what he says. 'Tis Evident then from Dr. T's. whole Carriage in this business, that (unless perhaps the natural force of Tradition work a Practical self-evidence in him of those points in which they who hold to Tradition and He agree, which he is not aware of) Dr. T. does not hold his Faith *absolutely*, but *morally True*, which is a very strong piece of Nonsense, as was shown in *Faith Vindicated*, and will be seen hereafter; and, therefore, it was but fitting and necessary that I should clear the word [*Truth*] from a ridiculous Equivocation or impertinent Distinction put upon it by such Sceptical pretenders to Christianity, and manifest, that the word *Truth* in those Propositions which express the *Existence* of a thing, speaks *Being*, and so necessarily involves Impossibility of *not being*, or Impossibility of *Falseness* in its notion, or (which is all one materially, though formally 'tis different,) that what's *True* must be *Impossible to be False*.

§. 11. Hence will appear the reason why I affirm'd that discourse *more than Mathematically-*

demonstrative; because it was immediately built on that First Principle in Metaphysics, 'Tis impossible the same thing should be and not be at once: Which is Superiour to and clearer than any Mathematical Principle, since the verity of all the Maxims of *This*, depend on the Truth of the *Other*; Or (to explain my self more fully) because 'tis intirely built on the notion or nature of [*Being*] which is more Evident than any Mathematical one: If he denies it, he is desir'd to produce any Mathematical notion which is of equal clearness; which done, a little reflexion will teach him that that Mathematical notion (whatever it is) can bear a *Definition*, that is, can be represented or made clearer than it was while express'd by that single word defin'd; whereas the notion of [*Being*] cannot possibly bear any, but while we go about to explicate it better, we are forc't to put its own notion in its definition, and other notions besides, less Evident than it self; and so, while we go about to explicate it better we explain it worse; whence it will appear evidently by our defeat when we attempt to clear it better, that 'tis the clearest notion that is, or clearer than Mathematical ones; and, consequently, the discourses grounded on the Nature of *Being* are more than Mathematically demonstrative. But I pardon this mistake to Dr. T. whom I verily judg to be sincerely Ignorant in such kind of speculationis, and not affectedly only, as he discovers himself to be in multitudes of others. Hence, by the way, is seen also
how

how strangely the World is mistaken in *Metaphysicks*; esteeming that highest Science intolerably obscure, and impenetrably difficult; whereas its Object being those notions that concern *Being*, all its Obscurity and Hardness to one whom right Logick hath taught accurately to distinguish, and steadily to keep distinct his notions, consist only in this that 'tis too Luminous and Intelligible; in the same manner as the Sun is hard to be seen at Noon-day; whence it happens that because we are inur'd by custome to make Definitions or Explications of what we are discoursing about, and here, the Subject not needing nor bearing it, we can make none of [*Being*] which is the Principal Object in that Science, hence, being put out of our road, we are at a puzzle, and seem to have lost our way through too much light. But 'tis time now to return to his Confutation of *Faith Vindicated*.

§. 12. His next Answer is, that in asserting *Infallibility* to be necessary to the true nature of *Faith*, I have the Generality of my own Church my professed Adversaries.. That is, Dr. T. will say any thing. Let him show me, I will not say the Generality or any great number, but even any one particular Catholick professing either that he relies not on the Church for his Faith, or that the Church he relies on is not *Infallible*, and I here declare that he is no Catholick, and doubt not but ull good Sons of the Church will joyn

with me in looking upon him as such. I hope those Readers who are Scholars will by the way reflect how solid a Method Dr. T. still takes to confute my Discourse; which is, to let all my Proofs or Premises alone untouched, and fall to combat my Conclusion with Extrinsiccal Medians. Next, he tells us the Church of Rome pretends only to Infallibility founded on Christs Promise to secure the Church from Error by a Supernatural Assistance, which is evidently different from Mr. S's. Rational Infallibility of Tradition. In which discourse are almost as many faults as words: For, 1. It supposes the Church excludes the concurrence of natural means to her Infallibility, which he shall never show. Next, it supposes I exclude Supernatural Assistance and admit only Natural; whereas I expressly include and openly vouch it in Sure footing, from pag. 85. to pag. 93. And 3ly. He supposes that Supernatural and Rational are Inconsistent; whereas in the place now cited, and never spoke to in his much applauded [Rule of Faith] I all a long prove the Supernatural means to be very Rational; and have so good an Opinion of God's Government of the World as to make account that Supernatural things, have far more excellent Reason for them than Natural ones; and that God does not enviously hide from us the sight of those Reasons, but permits and wills they should be seen and penetrated by those who are disposed and capable by the antecedent Illumination of Faith assisted by other Natural Knowledges to look into them.

§. 13. After this he tells us, *That the Divines of our Church (before this new way was found out) did generally resolve Faith into the Infallible Testimony of the Church; and this into our Saviours promise, and the Evidence of the true Church into motives only Prudential.* So that what he lately put upon our Church, is now come to signify Divines of our Church; which gives us to understand, Dr. T. makes account that Faith and School-Divinity, Church and Schools, Humane deduction and Divine Revelation, signify one and the same thing. Next, he acquaints us, that this new way of ours was the old way, in case the Divines did generally (before this new way was found out), resolve Faith into the Infallible Testimony of the Church. For nothing is more Evident than that all the late Explicators of Tradition, make it the same with the Attestation or Testimony of the Church. In that which follows I partly agree with that other sort of Divines, partly I dissent from them. I agree with them that our Saviour promist Infallibility to his Church; as also that the knowledge of this Promise, had by Faith, is an excellent satisfaction to those who are already Faithful; but I say withal that, being a Point of Faith, it can be no part of the Rule of Faith; for, so, the same thing would in the same respect be before and after it self; as also, that for the same Reason it can have no force upon one not yet arriv'd at Faith (as the Rule of Faith ought to have) because 'tis as yet unknown to him.

§ 14. Again, I agree with them that there are & ought to be many several *Prudential Reasons*, suited to men of several Capacities and Circumstances, moving them to disquisition, and inclining them to embrace the right Faith and joyn themselves to the true Church; but I say withal, that 'tis one thing to move a man to enquire, and incline him to *Assent*; another thing to settle him in a most firm *Assent* to such and such Points as absolutely Certain Truths, which is requisite to Faith. Hereupon I affirm, that this later Effect cannot be wrought rationally without Grounds truly Evident and absolutely Conclusive of the thing, and Knowable either by Practical Self-evidence to men of all sorts, or also to the Learned by a certainly concluding Proof, which I call a *Demonstration*. I affirm moreover (with due respect to those Divines) that Motives onely *Prudential* seem improper to be named in this Case; and that they must be *Principia Sapientia*, and not *Prudentia*, which can rationally make us absolutely Certain of the being or not-being of any thing, that is, of its Truth or Falseness; the Object of Prudence being *Agibilia*, and not *Intelligibilia*, as such; and its proper Exercise and Use being to determine a man to act exteriorly, or to act thus in Circumstances, where Contingency and hazard is found; and not to act interiorly, or meddle in the affair of Intellectual Certainty or Truth, depending solely on the Principles of our Understanding, which are Impossible to be False, and therefore plac'd beyond all Contin-

tingency and Hazard. In a word, I shall not fear to be thought *singular* in my Principles while I ground my self on the nature of *Faith*, which both *all* Catholicks and the *Generality* of those who are call'd *Christians* hold; and St. *Thomas* of *Aquin*, the Prince of School-Divines asserts, as I shew'd *Faith Vindicated*, pag. 130.

§ 14. As for all Objections of this nature, once more I request Dr. *T.* to make good this Consequence, that my Discourse cannot be true, unless *all* our Divines (even of the *same way* in common) agree with me, and I promise him this done, to reply distinctly to all his *Extrinfecal* and *Impertinent* Exceptions, which (waving in the mean time my Premises) he so constantly levels against my *Conclusions*. And, whereas he says, *I cannot reasonably charge him with those things till I have vindicated our own Divines*; I desire him to consider, that I could not, were I their Adversary, charge them, with what I can justly charge him. They all to a man hold the Catholick Church, on which they rely, *Infalible*, and hold this more firmly than they do any of their Speculations; and, consequently, they hold their Faith *Impossible to be False*, and so preserve the true Nature of Faith Inviolate: whereas, what he is to hold to most firmly, according to his Principles, is his own private Interpretation of Scripture, which he himself and all the world besides see and hold to be *Fallible*; and so he must say, that all his Faith built upon it is *possible to be a Ly* for any thing he knows; by which

which means, he *destroys* the nature of *Faith*; (as far as Gods Goodness will give him leave) in himself and others, and *corrupts* it into *Opinion*. They produce Motives, which, though they call them *Prudential*, are indeed some of them *Demonstrative*, and coincident in part with *Tradition*; whereas Dr. T. has nothing at all in his Grounds (taking him as opposing Catholics, or standing to his own Rule of Faith) which rightly stated, has even the least shew of *Prudential* to an unbiass'd man, much less of *Demonstrative*: Lastly, were it a proper place to handle the point at large, it were easy to shew they differ onely in a word, but Dr. T. errs in the whole *Thing*; though indeed in most of our Divines here cited, he mistakes them, and not they the main point, whatever he pretends; for, however they make *Prudential* Motives sufficient to find the Church, yet not one of them but makes the Authority of the Church when found (on which they ground their Faith) of far greater weight than *such an Evidence as does ordinarily satisfy prudent men in humane affairs*, since they all hold it *Infallible*, which is vastly more than Dr. T. holdsto ground his Faith.

§ 15. His third Answer is, that this Principle of mine *makes every true Believer Infallible in matters of Faith*, which (says he) is *such a Paradox as I doubt whether ever it enter'd into any other mens mind*. Now this Charge of his, joyn'd with my true Tenet, that true Believers are those
who

who rely on the *Motives or Means* left by God in his Church to light mankind in their way to Faith, signifies thus much, that 'tis a wonderful and strange Paradox, that those that follow and rely on the Motives laid by Gods Providence to direct them to Truth, should in so doing not possibly be led into Error; that is, 'tis a most absurd Paradox to say, that *Essential Truth* should not be the Immediate and Proper Cause of *Falshood*. But he discourses still upon this point, as if I had held that the Vulgar are preserv'd from possibility of Errour (or are *Infallible*) not through the Goodness of the Grounds left by God to preserve them from Erring, but from the strength of their own Understanding; which I do not remember, I ever thought or said, even of the most Learned. He asks, *If this be true, what need then of my Infallibility of Pope or Council?* And I ask him, what need Governors when people know their Duty, or Judges seeing the main of the Common Law is *Traditionary*, & to men vers'd in such affairs, *Self-known practically*? Let him but assure the world that no Upstart shall have an humour to rebel and innovate, but that all Christians shall practice and hold to what they know evidently was practic'd and held by the immediately foregoing Church, and I will assure him there will need no Infallible Definer, not any at all, as to such points. But Dr. T. discourses still as if there were no difference between the *rudè* dim degree of Knowledge in the Vulgar, and the accurate, *exact* and *oft-reflecting* Knowledge of those

those who by their great Learning, their Education, their Posture and Office are particularly vers'd and most deeply insighted into the affairs of Faith and all that belongs to the right explaining or wording it: & thence *declaring* it authentickly; so to keep its *distinct* Sense *clear* in the minds of the Faithful, which the Equivocating Witty Heretick endeavours to render confus'd and obscure. I wish he would study our Tenets a while, and understand them ere he undertakes to confute us. He is very raw in things of this nature.

§ 16. His next Errour is worse than the former. He would fain perswade Catholicks if any would believe him, That my *Principles* do plainly *exclude from Salvation*; at one blow *Excommunicate & Unchristian all that do not believe upon my Grounds*. And nothing is easier than to prove it in his way. 'Tis but mistaking again the Notion of *School-Divines*, for the Notion of *Faithful*, and *School* for Church (as he did lately) and the deed is done immediately without any more trouble. He is the happiest man in his *First Principles* and his *Method* that I ever met with; the parts of the former need not hang together at all, but are allow'd to be: *Incoherent*, and the later is a building upon false pretences and wrong Suppositions, and then what may not he prove, or what Conquest cannot he obtain by such powerful Stratagems? He sayes he has *prov'd at large* in the Answer to Sure-Footing, that the
Council

Council of Trent did not make Oral Tradition the sole Rule of her Faith. Possibly I am not so lucky as to light on this large Proof of his; all I can finde with an ordinary search is four or five lines *Rule of Faith, pag. 280.* where after a commonly-Objected & often-answer'd Citation from the Council of *Trent*, declaring that *Christian Faith and Discipline are contain'd in written Books & unwritten Traditions, & therefore that they receive & honor the Books of Scripture & also Traditions with equal pious affection and reverence:* He adds, *which I understand not how those do who set aside the Scripture, and make Tradition the sole Rule of their Faith.* Now, I had put this very Objection against my self, *Sure-f. pag. 346.* and proceeded to clear it to the end of *pag. 150.* particularly *pag. 147. 149.* upon this Reason, because, taking the Scripture interpreted by Tradition (as the Council expresses it self to do, and forbids any man to interpret it otherwise) it has the full Authority of *Gods Word*, and so equally to be revered. Whereas, taking it interpreted by private heads (which only will serve Dr T's turn) 'tis nothing less; as not engaging the Divine Authority at all. But now to the Notion of a *Rule* there is more required, as Dr. T. himself grants, and contends 'tis found in Scripture, viz. that it be so evident that every sensible may understand it, as to matters of Faith, and this (building on the Council of *Trents* Authority and Judgment) I deny to be found in the bare Letter of Scripture; and hence say 'tis no *Rule*: I omit

mit the repeating very many Arguments from the Council for that point, deduct from pag. 141. to pag. 146. never toucht, nor so much as taken notice of in that Mock-Answer of his.

§ 16. But that he may not mistake me; I shall not stick to declare whom I exclude from Salvation (at least from the way to it) whom not, and upon what Grounds, speaking of the ordinary course of Gods Providence, as I declare my self to do throughout this whole Treatise. I make account that *perfect Charity* or *Love* of God *above* and in *all* things is the Immediate Disposition to Bliss, or *Unitive* of a Soul to God; Also, that this Virtue cannot with a due heartiness be *connaturally* or *rationally* wrought in Souls, if the Tenet of a Deity's Existence and of Christian Faith be held *possible to be a Ly.* Hence, I am oblig'd by my Reason to hold that those who judge there are *no* absolutely-Conclusive Reasons for the Existence of a Deity, nor for the Truth of Christian Faith, are (as such) out of the Road of Salvation. On the other side, those who hold the Church, *the Pillar* and *Ground* of the Truths they profess, *Infallible*, and by Consequence their Faith Impossible to be False, as all Catholikes do, though, as Divines, they fail in making out how, and by what particular means it comes to be Infallible; yet through the virtue of this *firm* and *steady Adhesion* to such Principles as are, because they are *Truths*, apt to beget *solid* and *well-grounded* cha

is, indeed True) Virtues, such as are a *vigorous Hope*, and a *fervent and all-ove-powering Charity*, hence they possess the *Connatural Means*, or are in the *right way* to Heaven. And, for this Reason I esteem Dr. T's way of discoursing concerning a Deity and Faith in his Sermons most pestilient and mischievous to Souls, as being apt of its own Nature to incline them (if they have wit to discern its shallowness) first to a kind of Scepticism in Religion, and at next to Carelessness, Irreligion and Atheism; though truly I think 'tis not his Intention to do so, but that his shortness in Understanding the Nature and Grounds of Christianity makes him conceit he does excellently, even to admiration, all the while he commits such well-meaning Follies. Nor do I think the Church of *England* will upon second thoughts think fit to Patronize Principles so *destructive* to the Nature of *Faith*, found in the breast of every Protestant I ever yet met with; who all with one mouth will own that 'tis absolutely *Impossible* *Christian Faith should be a Lye*, and abhor the contrary Position as wicked, and damnable. How Dr. T. may have seduced some of his own Auditors by preaching Controversy to them, which he extremely affects, I cannot tell; 'tis according as they incline to believe him more than the Generality of the Christian World, whose Sentiments he opposes in his Discourses about the Ground of Faith.

DISCOURSE VIII.

With what Art Dr. T. answers my METHOD. A Present made to his Credulous Friends, shewing how solidly he confuted SURE-FOOTING by readily granting the main of the Book. What is meant by Tradition. That J. S. is not singular in his way of discoursing of the Grounds of Faith.

§ 1. **H**E makes a pass or two at my *METHOD*, and that I conceive must serve for an Answer to it: for an Answer, I heard, was threatned would appear very shortly, but this pleasant Preface was the only thing which appeared; and all that appears like Answer in it, is that he would make it believ'd he ought not answer at all. And this he does very neatly and like a Master: For, let no man think I have a mean Opinion of Dr. T. but every one is not good at all things: some are good at proving, some at disproving, some at shifting of the Question without either proving or disproving; every one in his way; and in his way I know no man living a greater Master, nor so great as the Dr. Two things he does, and both of them strange ones: First, he affirms that Discourse is
found-

founded on the self-evident Infallibility of oral Tradition: Next, that He has sufficiently considered that point in the Answer to Surefooting. The first of them would make the Reader apprehend I there suppos'd Oral Tradition self-evidently Infallible, and then run on all the way upon that supposition; which if it obtain belief (as from his Credit he hopes it may) since every Scholar knows all Discourses must be founded either on first Principles, or at least on such as are granted by those against whom we argue, he sees I must needs be held the most ridiculous Discourser that ever spoke or writ, to build a whole Treatise upon a Supposition unprov'd, and which begs the whole Question. Now, whatever I concluded in that short Discourse, I deduced step by step, and made the foregoing Proposition draw still after it by undeniable Consequence the following one: He concealing all mention of Proof, or endeavour of it, calls my Conclusions, Principles; and then who would think but that I had laid them to build that Discourse upon them, and deserted my usual way of beginning with the known Natures of the Things in hand, as I there did with those of Rule and Faith, and from them proceeded minutely to whatever I concluded. Had his Friend Dr. St. taken the same course, his Principles would have evidently discovered their own weakness of themselves, and had excus'd others the unnecessary trouble of answering them. Next, he makes me say, that the Infallibility of this Rule is evident to

common Sense and says himself, that the Foundation of this Method is the *self-evident infallibility of Oral Tradition*: by which words an honest Reader would verily think I supposed it *gratuitous to be self-evident to common Sense*; and never troubled my self to prove it; whereas, though I indeed hold it *practically self-evident* (of which I have elsewhere given account,) yet I proceeded as if I did not, but proved § 8. out of the Natures of *Rule* and *Faith*, that the *Rule of Faith*, whatever it be, must be *Infallible*: § 10. that therefore Scripture's Letter is *not* that Rule, and § 11. that Tradition is. The Reader being thus questionless well dispos'd to think it very unnecessary he should consider, as he calls it, or answer any passage of a thing made up of unprov'd Principles, or built on an unprov'd Supposition, he tells him farther, that he has *sufficiently considered that point* in the Answer to *Sure-footing*; whence he is *not concern'd to take notice of it* at present. And so the business is done; for why should he take pains to give answer to that which deserves none; or, if it did, is answered? This Reason though, by the way, is a little open. For, in case I did bring any Arguments in my Method to make good that Tradition is an *Infallible Rule of Faith*, and this after I had seen, and perhaps *sufficiently consider'd* too, what he replies to *Sure-footing*; for any thing appears, I may either have amended the Reasons given in *Sure-footing*, or produc't better in my *Method*; and so, whatever he has said to *Sure-footing*, it might have been

been proper to have *considered*, and said something to the *Method* too; *hats*. He could say with truth that he had already answered the very *Reasons* urg'd in it, which I do not remember he has, nor am confident himself neither.

§. 2. But yet, to Insure in this one passage, how rare a piece his cry'd-up *Rule of Faith* is; and how excellently it answers *Sarason's*, let us a little reflect what this *sufficient consideration* of his amounts to. *Sarason's* was divided into two parts, The first from the Properties of a Rule of Faith, proved that Tradition was that Rule, and this was the business of that Book from the beginning to pag. 57. and particularly of the 3rd Discourse, whose Title was [Of the Necessity of Tradition, and that all the Properties of the Rule of Faith do clearly agree to it.] The 2^d part begins Discourse 6. and endeavors to demonstrate the Inadequeness of Tradition, or that it has hitherto not been followed. The Confutation of my first part ends in his Rule of Faith, pag. 150. the Answer to my 2^d begins pag. 151. of these two the former was in a manner the whole concern of my Book: For if it were prov'd that Tradition was the Rule of Faith, that is, the only Conveyer of Christs Doctrine hitherto, it must either be said by those against whom I argue, that it hath not been hitherto convey'd to us at all, and so that there are no Christians in the world, which they will not say, or else that those who proceed upon Tradition for their Rule are the right Christians. Whence the later part was

only *ex abundanti*; not of absolute necessity, especially in case I argu'd *ad hominem*. This being so, let Dr. T's Friends and mine, when they hap to discourse about us, please to send for his Book and mine, and with an equal partiality distrusting us both, rely upon Sir *Tho. Moors* pair of honest unbiass'd witnesses, *Their own Eyes*. They will find that his *Rule of Faith* undertakes pag. 146. to answer my 5th, *Disc.* which pretended to shew that all the properties of the *Rule of Faith* do clearly agree to *Tradition*, and thence concluded *Tradition The Rule of Faith*, and accordingly quotes pag. 41. where that Discourse began in *Surefooting*. They will see the Title of his *Sect. 6.* (which he uses to put in the Margin) is, *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition*. Now I assigned seven such Properties *Surefoot*, pag. 11, and 12. He was pleas'd to make but two, *Part. 2. Sect. 1. Sufficiently plain, & sufficiently certain*. Coming then at the bottom of pag. 148. to confute that whole Discourse, which was the most substantial part of my Book; and contained the most pressing Arguments to my main purpose, he compleats his answer to it in one single page, viz. 149: nay, in one piece of that Page. This would seem strange, and something difficult, if any thing were so to Dr. T. and his singular Method of answering Books. All, sayes he, that he pretends to prove in this Discourse is, that, if this Rule hath been followed and kept to all along, the Christian Doctrine neither has nor can have

have received any change. 'Tis all indeed I pretended, and all I desired to prove; for, certainly, if it can preserve Christian Doctrine unchanged, it has in it the Nature of a Rule; and what has in it the Nature of a Rule is, I conceive, a Rule, whether it have been followed or not, which is a Question I had not then examined, but reserved to my following Discourses. To this then after his *sufficient consideration*, What says the Dr.? *All this*, says he, *is readily granted him.* For my part, I have no reason to except against that answer; for all my Writing aims at is that people should see the Truth and acknowledge it; and since he *readily grants all* I pretend to prove, I were very unreasonable if I should not be contented. Though, if I were dispos'd to be cross, this word *readily* is something liable to exception. After he has employ'd a good part of his Book in preparing to speak to the main Question, in dividing and subdividing, and playing all the tricks which may make it look like an Answer; and when he comes to the Question to *grant* it, because he could do no other, is indeed to *grant* it, but *not very readily*. People will not think he was very *ready* to do that which before he comes to he makes such a pother, and still hangs back, and pretends to hold the contrary, even there where he grants it; as is seen in his Title. But I am not so peevish, and so the Truth be agreed, mean not to fall out about the words, let him use what he pleases in God's Name. Marry, I suspect his Friends will not so easily be satisfied,

& perhaps be apt to think that this is a more speedy way of *answering*, than a good way of *confuting*. For in truth, 'tis an odd way of *shewing*, *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition*, (which he undertook in his Title) to grant, &c. that it can do what a Rule *should* do, that is, *has all the Properties of a Rule of Faith*. All I have to complain of is, he recalls his grant, and will not stand to his word given publickly, and after *sufficient consideration*; but after he has acknowledged the Truth, continues still to contradict it, and bear others in hand that he has *sufficiently answered* what he has plainly granted. This cross proceeding is a thing which as well as he has deserv'd of Truth and me, I cannot approve, and I heartily wish for his own and the worlds sake, he would stedily own, at least his own concessions. In the mean time let us see, if the thing be not as plain as plain may be. In stead of five Properties prov'd in my Discourse to belong to Tradition, he puts two of his own: First, that it be *plain and intelligible*, and this he grants here pag. 149. is found in Tradition. His Second is, that we must be sufficiently assured *That the Doctrine delivered down by Oral Tradition hath receiv'd no corruption or change in the conveyance*: And here, he sayes, *is the difficulty*. Where, good Dr? We are inquiring *which* is the Rule; must we *before* we can find it, be assured of the *Doctrine*, when the Rule is the very thing which gives us this assurance? If we must *before-hand* be assured of the *Doctrine*, we need a Rule
no

no more, for the business is done already; or, if we did, it is impossible to find one; for Assurance of the *Doctrⁿ* being the effect of the *Rule*, we make the *Rule* the effect of this Assurance, and so can have no Assurance till we have a *Rule*, and no *Rule* till we have this Assurance. This indeed is a Difficulty, and I think an Insurmountable one: But all proceeds from his jumbling two distinct Questions, and confounding the First, which alone I treat, and he pretends to answer there, namely, which is the *Rule of Faith*; with the other which I treat afterwards, and examine, *Whether it have been alwayes followed?* For nothing can be more plain, than that the two ways by which Christian Doctrine may have received corruption or change are these; either a defect of power, or aptitude in the *Rule* to convey it, or defect of will in the *Persons* who were to have been guided by it, and make use of the power it has. And 'tis no less plain, that in case we be sufficiently assured that Tradition has power and is apt to convey it uncorrupted down; we are sufficiently assured, that it has all that is requisite to a *Rule*. And since Dr. T. grants 'tis plain and intelligible, he must grant the *Persons* and not the Thing (or Tradition) is to blame if it have not done what 'is qualified to doe. To have a will to follow Tradition is the Property of the *Persons* (or good Christians) and not of the Thing they are to follow, or of the *Rule*, which if it be plain, they might have followed it if they would. A Sword is a Sword whether men cut with it or

no; and a Pen is a Pen though no man write with it. Distinguishing then the Properties of of a *Rule*, from the properties of the *Persons* who are to use it, 'ris plain that his Second Qualification sufficiently certain agrees no less to Tradition than his First, sufficiently plain. For what can sufficiently certain signifie more, than that, in case it have been used, *Christian Doctrine* neither has nor can have received any change. Both these he grants, and plainly and readily, and these two are all himself requires. Wherefore 'tis as plain as can be, that there is no difficulty about the point I there treated, *Whether Tradition have all the properties belonging to a Rule of Faith: & Dr. T.* his difficulty is this, *Whether have been followed*, which belongs to the *Persons* who should be guided by it, and is wholly extrinsecal to the Nature and Constitution of a Rule.

§. 3. The Dr. then had good Reason to say, her was not concern'd to take notice of this point, so when a thing is granted, there is in truth little more to be said to it. I for my part finde some difficulty how to reconcile his difficulty and his ready grant, and make them hang together with Sense. The difficulty is, sayes he, *Whether we have sufficient assurance that the Doctrine delivered down by Oral Tradition hath received no corruption or change in its conveyance.* He puts it then delivered by Tradition, that is, he puts this Rule has been followed; and before he sayes, that if this Rule has been follow'd, *Christian Doctrine* neither has nor can have received any change; and then makes a difficulty

gulty whether there *have been* a change, where there neither *is* nor *can* be any. This I must confess is something difficult to apprehend. Otherwise there is no difficulty at all in conceiving, that if there have been any change in Christian Doctrine, this must have happened, not by defect of the *Rule*, which, if follow'd, he sayes, leaves not so much as a *possibility* of it; but of the *Persons* who were deficient in their Duty, and would not follow it. He may perhaps say, that by *Delivered down*, he meant no more, but *pretended to be delivered down*; but to omit that by *delivered* to mean *not delivered*, is something uncouth; this is plainly to fasten the difficulty upon the *Doctrine*, not the *Rule*, and to doubt whether it have been follow'd, not whether it be a *Rule*. And so we have sufficient assurance, at least as far as the Dr. can give it us, that Tradition is as well *sufficiently certain* as *sufficiently plain*, since he assures us, that if it be follow'd, no change in the Doctrine either *is* or *can* be: which being all the Certainty can possibly be expected from, or desired in a Rule, his *difficulty*, such as it is, belongs to another place, where 'tis expressly treated. And this is Dr. T's *sufficient consideration* of the point.

§. 4. What pretty fantastical things these words are, and how apt they are to trapan a man who looks not narrowly into their *Sense*. One would have thought, & I imagine the Dr. intended men should think that his [*sufficiently consider'd*] meant *sufficiently confuted*. When alas! they signify plainly and readily granted. 'Twas a neat and

and a safe expression though; for had he said, *sufficiently answer'd, or confuted, or oppos'd* so much as by a *bare denial*, or even attempted to do any of these; [*All this is readily granted*] would have been a sly stumbling block in his way. But those safe easy words [*sufficiently considered*] are very choice, and may signify any thing, or nothing, which you please; for one may *sufficiently consider* a thing in his mind, and upon *sufficient consideration* find it best to let it alone, and say never a syllable to it, or one may *grant*, or *deny*, or do any thing with it, and these pliable words will fit whatever he does. Those who are a little straitned and find *impartial Reason* not so favourable to them as they wish, should by all means learn this gentle insignificant way of *Expression*, which may happen to do them more service than a great deal of crabbed *knowledge*, which is of a stubborn nature, and does very well where Truth is of the party, but is quite out and signifies nothing against it; whereas *this*, like those easy pliable things, *Probabilities* (the matter which best fits this pliant manner of expressing) is wonderful *complaisant*, and if you happen to *change sides*, will be as serviceable to *falsehood*. And I would particularly commend this phrase [*sufficiently considered*] for a pattern to those who study the Art, and need it.

§ 5. People will not expect from me to give a Reason of this unexpected kindness of the Dr. for they are sufficiently assured I am not of his Council. But I think he *granted* no more than what

what he knew not how to deny. For, whoever reads *Suref. p. 48. & 55* will find the *Self-evidence of Tradition* so explained, that, supposing it *sufficiently plain & intelligible*, which I there proved, and he here grants, its Ruling power is as plainly made out as this Identical Proposition, that *the same is the same with its self*; and particularly in my *Method. pag. 16. and 17.* which kind of Propositions a man may be angry at, but cannot so handsomely deny; for, if he could, I suppose he rather would have done so, than yielded the very point in Controversie, and which is besides so favourable to Catholics, and destructive to his Cause. This possibly is the Cause of his Resentment against *Identical Propositions*, of which he would revenge himself for the injury they have done him; and therefore in his *Preface* very politickly bids opens defiance to all the whole Tribe of such ill-condition'd Principles. In the mean time, the beginning and end of that sixth Section are very observable. The Title is, *that the properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Tradition*; and this signifies, that it is not the Rule of Faith: coming to make good this undertaking, he granted that 'tis plain and intelligible; and can, if people stick to it, preserve *Christian Doctrine from change*: and this signifies, that the properties of a Rule do belong to it, and that it is the Rule. For I do not remember he ever pretended there were two Rules of Faith; wherefore since Tradition hath power to do what a Rule should do, viz. preserve Faith uncorrupted and

and unchanged, Tradition certainly *is the Rule*, and so he expressly calls it, p. 49. *But that this Rule hath alwayes been followed*, &c. and may for any thing appears *here*, hold perhaps, that Scripture is *not the Rule*. And yet all this while his Title is, that Tradition had not the *properties of a Rule*, or *is no Rule*. But the Conclusion is every jot as remarkable, for he had no sooner readily granted all I pretended to prove, but he as readily *diverts* the Reader from reflecting upon it, by these words: *But that this Rule has alwayes been followed*, nay that 'tis impossible there should have been any deviation from it (as he pretends) this we deny, not only as untrue, but as one of the most absurd Propositions that ever pretended to demonstrative evidence. Would any Reader suspect this serious clutter of words should be both untrue, and nothing to purpose besides? For, it plainly speaks of a Question, which is *not the Question* in that place, but reserv'd for another, and which he should have let alone till its time come. Yet I was to blame to say, it was *nothing to purpose*. For 'tis to *great purpose*; and the Transition is so nimble and delicate, that the Reader ceases to reflect upon the import of his concession, and begins to think me a man of confidence, and strange confidence too, who can hold such palpable Nonsense. But pray where did I ever pretend 'tis impossible there should have been any deviation from Tradition? Sure 'twas in my sleep, and the Dr. has taken me napping. Otherwise as far as I am acquainted with my self, and mine own actions

ons, I am so far from having writ or said, or so much as thought that there never was nor could be *any* deviation from it; that on the contrary I have alwayes thought, and have said and writ, that there have been *many* deviations from it, and *as many* as there have been Heresies in God's Church. Nay, (as far as I remember) I have not said so much, as that I had absolutely demonstrated there *had* or *could* be no *total* defection from it. Indeed I *endeavour'd* to demonstrate there could not, but I pretended no more but to *endeavour* it; and the Titles of the sixth and eighth Discourse in *Surefooting* will bear me witness. But I know not under what unlucky Planet the Dr. wrote this Discourse, where nothing will sadge, and every thing he says, proves against himself. This *untrue* and absurd *Proposition* as he calls it, and as it is indeed, that 'tis *impossible* there should have been any deviation from Tradition, implies at least thus much, that this deviation is *extrinsecal* to the Nature of a Rule; for else *Scripture* could not be said to be a Rule; from which 'tis plain that many both *can* and *do* deviate. Wherefore the Proposition as absurd as it is *not more* absurd than it is to urge it against Tradition; which, whatever become of the Proposition, is never a whit less a Rule. And indeed the true difference, and true point of Controversie betwixt us stands thus: I say, and prove, and himself by granting all my 5th. Discourse, and that Tradition is *plain*, grants, that Tradition is so excellently qualifi'd for a Rule, that

that let men but endeavour to follow it still to their power, it will bring down the same uncorrupted Faith to the Worlds end: whereas 'tis known and evident, that multitudes of men have follow'd and do follow Scripture to their power, and differ enormously in their Tenets, and that as far as contradiction will let them go; as far as There is a Trinity, and there is not a Trinity, Christ is God, and Christ is not God, than which as none can be more wide, so, excepting the Tenet of the Deity it self, none can be more Fundamental, or have greater influence upon Christian life.

§ 6 Reflecting then that I never said or thought it was self-evident that Tradition had always been followed, but only that it is of own nature a self-evidently infallible Rule; abstracting from being followed, his answer to my Method is this: I have not spoken to the point before, and therefore am not concern'd to speak to it now, for why should people expect more from me here than elsewhere? or rather, I have granted the point already, and therefore am not concern'd to say more to it. And I, for my part, think he is in the right; & because it seems a little unreasonable to require the same thing should be done twice, I think it best to leave him to his sufficient consideration, and go on to the next. Onely, I desire the Reader to reflect, how empty a brag 'tis in the Drs. how partial in their Friends to magnify this peece as Unanswerable. Yet in one Sense 'tis such; for a Ready Grant of what's Evident Truth can never be answer'd, or refuted.

§ 7. His next Pretence is, that my *METHOD* excludes from Salvation the far greatest part of our own Church. To which, though enough hath been said already, yet, because the clearing this will at once give account of what I mean, when I affirm Faith must be known antecedently to Church, which bears a shew as if I held we are not to rely on the Church for our Faith: I shall be something larger in declaring this Point. To perform which more satisfactorily, I note, 1. That those who are actually from their Child-hood in the Church, have Faith instill'd into them after a different manner from those who were educated in another Profession, and after come to embrace the right Faith. The former are imbued after a natural way with the Churches Doctrine, and are educated in a high Esteem and Veneration of the Church it self: Whereas the Later are to acquire Faith by considering and looking into its Grounds; and are educated rather in a hatred against the true Church than in any good opinion of her. The former therefore have the full weight of the Churches Authority, both as to Naturals and Supernaturals actually apply'd to them and working its effect upon them; Practical self-evidence both of the Credit due to so Grave, Learned, Ample and Sacred an Authority, as also of the Holiness, the Morality or Agreeableness of her Doctrine to Right Reason (which they actually experience) rendering in the mean time their Assent *Connatural*, that is, Rational or *Virtu-*

one. The later Fancy nothing Supernatural in her, nor *experience* the Goodness of her Doctrine, but have it represented to them as Wicked and Abhominable: In a word, the Former have both Faith and the Reasons for it, practically infill'd into them in a manner at the same time, and growing together daily to new degrees of Perfection, whereas, the Later must have Reasons *antecedently* to Faith, and apprehending as yet nothing *Supernatural* in the Church, must begin with something *Natural*, or meerly *Humane*, which may be the Object of an *unelevated* Reason: and, withal, such as may be of its own nature able to satisfy rationally that hesitation and disquisitive doubt wherewith they are perplex'd, and settle them in a firm Belief. 2. My Discourse in that Treatise, (as appears by the Title) is intended for those who are yet to arrive at *satisfaction in Religion*, that is, for those who are not yet of the Church; and, so. I am to speak to their natural Reason, by proposing something which is an Object proper and proportion'd to it, and as it were, leading them by the hand, step by step to the *Church*, though all the while they walk upon their own Legs, and see with their own Eyes; that is, proceed upon plain Maxims of *Humane Reason* every step they take. 3. Though I use the Abstract word [*TRADITION*] yet I conceive no wise man will imagine I mean by it some *Idea Platonica*, or separated Formality hovering in the Air without any Subject, but that the *Thing* I indeed meant to signify by it,

it, is the Church, as DELIVERING or as Testifying, and, (taking it as apply'd to those who are not yet capable to discern any Supernaturality in the Church) the Natural or Humane Authority of the Church, or the Church Testifying she receiv'd this Faith uninterruptedly from the beginning. So that Tradition differs from Church, as a man consider'd precisely as speaking and acting, differs from Himself consider'd and express'd as such a Person; which known by Speech and Carriage, or by himself as speaking and acting, other considerations also belonging to him, which before lay hid, and are involv'd, or (as the Schools express it) confounded in the Subject (or Suppositum) become known likewise. So the Churches Humane Testimony or Tradition, which (as was shown Sure-f. p. 81, 82, 83.) is the greatest and most powerfully supported, even naturally, of any in the World, is a proper and proportion'd object to their Reason who yet believe not the Church; but, it being known thence, that the Body who proceeds on that Ground, possesses the first-deliver'd, that is, Right Faith, and so is the true Church, immediately all those Prerogatives and Supernatural Endowments apprehended by all who understand the nature of Faith to spring out of it, or attend on it, are known to appertain, and to have ever appertain'd to the True Church; and, amongst the rest, Goodness or Sanctity, the proper Gift of the H. Ghost, with all the Means to it; which with an incomparable Efficacy strengthens the Souls of the Faithful as to the Delivery of Right Faith; whence she is justly held and be-

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liev'd by the new converted Faithful to be *assisted* by the H. Ghost; which, till some Motive *meerly Humane* had first introduc'd it into their Understandings, that this was the *True Church*, they could not possibly apprehend.

§.8. In this way then of discoursing, the Church is still the *onely* Ascertainer of Faith, either taken in her whole Latitude, as in those who are *already* Faithful; or consider'd *in part* onely, that is, as *delivering* by way of naturally *Testifying*, (which I *here* call *Tradition*) in order to those who are yet to embrace Faith. Whence appears the perfect groundlessness of Dr. T's Objection, and how he wholly misunderstands my Doctrine in this point, when he says the Discourse in my *Method* does *Unchristian* the *far greatest part* of our own Church. For first, he mistakes the Ground of Believing to those *actually in the Church*, for that which is the Ground for those who are yet *out of the Church*, to find *which is* the Church: Next, since all Believers *actually in the Church*, even to a Man, rely on the Church both naturally and supernaturally assisted, and I am discoursing onely about the Natural means for those who are *out of the Church* to come to the Knowledge of it, his Discourse amounts to this, that, because those who are yet *coming* to Faith, rely onely on the *Humane* Testimony of the Church, therefore they who are *in the Church* and rely upon the Church both humanely and divinely assisted, are *no Christians*. In a word, this way of Divinity or Resolution of Faith which I take, makes every man, both those in the Church,
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and those out of it, rely on the Churches Authority or Testimony diversly consider'd in order to their respective capacities, and so still makes the Church THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH, which all Catholicks in the World (not so much as any *one* School-Divine excepted) hold the securest way that can be imagined; And should any one dislike it, I see not what he can with any show pretend. He must allow some Natural Motive antecedent to Faith, and what is known by means of it; that is, he must grant some Motive antecedent to the Knowledge of Supernatural Assistance, and where he will find in the whole World any such Motive stronger than is the Humane Authority of the Church as to matters of Faith, I profess I know not, nor I am confident can any man living imagine. If this then be, absolutely speaking, the securest way that is, 'tis securer or firmer than is the way of proceeding upon Motives of Credibility, and incomparably more secure than is that of resolving Faith into Motives onely Prudential. Though indeed, things rightly stated and understood, the Motives of Credibility are some of them Coincident with Tradition, and the rest which can lay just claim to Certainty depend on it, taken at large, as their Ground, as hath been prov'd in the Corollaries to *Sure-footing*.

It may be ask'd, Why, since *Tradition* and *Church* are one and the same Thing, I did not chuse to say, that the CHURCH gives us Knowledge of the first deliver'd Faith rather than that TRADITION

does so, seeing none could have scrupled or excepted against the former manner of Expression; whereas this gives occasion of mis-apprehension to some unattentive Readers. I answer, I us'd on that occasion the word [*Tradition*] rather than the word [*Church*] for the same reason the Geometricians use the words *Line* or *Surface*, when they have a mind to express *Body* as *Long* or *Broad*; for these are in reality the same thing with *Body*; but, in regard *Body* is the Subject of many other Considerations as well as *these*, and *these* speak *Body* precisely according to the Considerations of *Length* and *Breadth*, to which onely it was Intended to speak, hence it was better both for Succinctness of Expression and Exactness of Science, which is built on the perfect distinction of our Conceptions to use the *Abstract* or Distinguishing words [*Line*] and [*Surface*] rather than the *Concrete* or Confused word [*Body*] which involves much more than the Discourser in that circumstance intended to consider or speak to. Now this being the very method observed in that Science which bears the name for the greatest Exactness in Discourse, I much fear, the Objecters mistake proceeds from not reflecting that whoever pretends to an Accurate and Connected way of Discourse, and rigorously to conclude what he intends, must either follow that best of Methods, or he falls short of his Duty, and wrongs his Cause.

§. 9. To clear this a little better, and withal to apply it, I shall make choice of another familiar
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Instance. We use to say in Common Speech that the *Countenance* or *Carriage* of a Man makes known his *Genius*. Now all these three, viz. *Countenance*, *Carriage*, and *Genius*, are in reality most evidently the *same* Thing with the *Man* himself; onely they differ from it in the manner of Expression; the word *Man* nominating the *Whole* or *Intire Thing* which is the Subject of all these and innumerable other Considerabilities, confusedly imply'd in that word. The other three are more *distinct* indeed in their manner of signifying, but they fall exceedingly short of the others vast extent, and express Man but *in part*, or onely a few *Respects* found in that Subject, whereof some are *less* known, some *more*, and so a *Means* to know *others*. Whence it comes to pass that *Countenance* signifying Man as *Looking*, or according to the outward Appearance of that *part* in him call'd the *Face*; also *Carriage* signifying him as *bearing* or *demeaning* himself; and, lastly, *Genius*, as having such a peculiarity of Humour or Nature in him, hence these words, [*The Speech, Countenance, and Carriage of a Man discover his Genius*] amount to this, the Man according to his Speech, Countenance, or Carriage, which are visible and more Intelligible Considerations belonging to him, is a means to notifie himself to us according to something in him which is latent and less manifest, viz. his *Genius*. This I say is the plain Sense of the other words, onely this *later* manner of speaking is prolix and troublesome, the *other* short and yet fully expressive of the Speakers Intention. Again,

the *other* manner of Expression is Proper and Apt; whereas should one put it thus, [*The Man makes known the Man*] besides the confusedness of the expression, since *Man* signifies the whole Intire Thing without distinguishing any particular Respects, it would make the *whole* (or the *self-same* thing) abstracting from all different Respects to be *before* and *after*, *more* known and *less* known than it self: which is a direct Contradiction.

§.10. Applying then this Discourse. The word *Church* being a Congregation of *Men*, answers in its way of expressing to the word *Man* in the Example now given, and involves confusedly in its notion innumerable Considerations belonging to that Body; of which *True Faith*, which is, as it were, the *Genius* or Nature of the True Church, is of it self latent, unknown, and far from self-discoverable. Others, such as is the Humane Testimony of the Church, meant in those Circumstances by the word [*Tradition*] in regard it depends on Testifying Authority, is *more* known, and being Oral and Practical, fitly corresponds to Speech, Countenance, Carriage, and such-like, It being known then by this means that such a Body has in it the *first-deliver'd*, or True Faith, 'tis known immediately that having in it the *Genius* or Nature of a True Church, 'tis *indeed* the True Church: Again, it being known likewise and conceived by all who understand what is meant by that word, that True Faith is a firm Adhesion to Christs Doctrine, also it being apprehended by those against whom we dispute (nay demonstrable

ble out of the nature of that Doctrine) that 'tis a means to *love God above all things*; hence 'tis justly concluded that there is in the Generality, or in great Multitudes of this Body, a due love of Heaven call'd Sanctity or Charity, which is the Gift peculiarly attributed to the H. Ghost; and it being known and experienc'd by those already in the Church that this Love of Heaven or Sanctity gives the Faithful a particular Strength and Power to perform all good Duties, and this of preserving uncorrupted the deliver'd Faith being *one*, and that a most concerning one, hence they come to know that the Church is *assisted by the H. Ghost*, as in all other good Duties, so especially in this, of delivering and continually proposing Right Faith: So that (as Reason requires) by some *Natural* and therefore more easily known Assistances belonging to the Church, those out of her are brought to the knowledge that she is *Supernaturally assisted*. This is the Method I take in resolving Faith: If any man can show me any other that is either more solid, more orderly, more connatural and agreeable to the nature of Faith, or more honourable to Gods Church, I shall as willingly and easily quit it, as I now out of long and serious consideration embrace and firmly adhere to it. But it appears plain to me, that whoever contradicts this, especially as to that point which occasion'd this Discourse, must withal contradict a Maxim on which all Scieñce is principally built, namely, that *The Definition is more known than the Notion defin'd*; which I take to be understood not onely of the *Whole Definition*,

but of each single part of it; for if any one part be more obscure than the thing defin'd, the whole Definition, as having that obscure part in it, must necessarily be more obscure likewise. Wherefore the Definition of a Church being *Cœtus Fidelium*, &c. A Congregation of Faithful, &c. the notion of *Faithful* (and consequently, of *Faith*) must either be more Known and Knowable than that of *Church*, and consequently antecedent to it in right method of Discourse, or the Definition would be obscurer than the Thing defin'd, which if it be said, I must confess I know not to what end Definitions are, or why they do not rather conduce to Ignorance than to Science. Add, that True Faith being most *Intrinsic* and *Essential* to a Church, 'tis by consequence a more forcible and demonstrative Argument to convince inevitably that such a Body in which 'tis found is the True Church, than is any *Extrinsic* Mark whatsoever. And if it be objected that *Extrinsic* Marks are more easily Knowable, I doubt not but in those who are led away by superficial Appearances there is some show of Reason in this Objection, but I utterly deny that if we go to the bottom to settle the Absolute Certainty of any of these Marks, any of them can be known *at all*, much less *more easily known*, if the Certainty of Tradition in visible and practical matters of Fact be questionable; and that neither Scripture, Fathers, Councils, Histories, Monuments, or any thing else of that nature can pretend to Absolute Certainty, if Tradition be Uncertain, or can pretend to be known, unless

unless Tradition be *first* (that is, *more*.) known, as is shown particularly in the Corollaries to *Sure-footing*.

§.11. Hence is seen that the word [*Tradition*] is taken in a threefold sence; For the *Way* of Tradition or Delivery taken at large; For the *Humane* or *Natural* Authority of the Church, as delivering; And lastly, for its *Divinely-assisted* or *Supernatural* Authority, call'd properly *Christian*. When 'tis taken in *one* sence, when in *another*, the nature of the matter in hand and the concomitant circumstances will evidently determine. Onely we must note that these three Notions are not adequately contradistinct, the later still including the former, as *Length*, *Breadth*, and *Depth* do in *Count* and *Quantity*. For, The *Humane* Authority of the Church includes *Tradition taken at large*, and adds to it the *best Assistances of Nature*, as is shown *Sure-f.* p. 82, 83. The *Supernatural* Authority includes all found in the other two, and adds to it the *best Assistances of Grace*, as is particularly declared there from p. 84. to p. 93. So that all the Perfection of Tradition that is imaginable is to be found in that which we call *Christian*, or in the *Testifying Authority of Christs Church*.

§.12. But because 'tis still D. T's best play to make use of *Extrinssecal* Exceptions so to divert the Readers Eye, and avoid answering my *Intrinssecal* Reasons taken from the nature of the Things, with which he is loth to grapple; and since amongst the rest, he is very frequent at this Impertinent Topick of my discoursing the Grounds of Faith after

a different manner than other Divines do, it were not amiss, omitting many pregnant Instances which might be collected out of Dr. *Straford*, the Learned Author of *Protestancy without Principles*, and many others to the same purpose, to show how far he mistakes in this point, by instancing in one Controvertist of eminent both Fame and Learning as any in his time; one who writ before *Rusworth's* Dialogues appeared, or perhaps were thought of, and so cannot be suspected a Follower of that *New Way*, as Dr. T. call it: I mean Mr. *Fisher*. This able Controvertist, in his *Censure of Dr. White's Reply*, p. 83, 84. maintains that UNWRITTEN (that is, Oral and Practical) TRADITION is the PRIME GROUND OF FAITH, more Fundamental than Scripture, and shows how his Adversary Mr. *White* the Minister grants in effect the same. In his Answer to the nine Points, p. 27. he concludes strongly that Scriptures are not the Prime Principles of Faith supposed before Faith, which Infidels seeing to be True, resolv'd to believe the Mysteries of Faith, but onely are secondary Truths, dark and obscure in themselves, believed upon the Prime Principles of Faith. Which words as amply and fully express that Scripture is not the express Rule of Faith as can be imagin'd: For how should that have in it self the nature of an Intellectual Rule, which in it self is dark and obscure? Or how can that which is believed upon the Prime Principles (that is, partly at least, upon the Ground or Rule of Faith, be any part of that Rule; since what's believ'd is the Object of Faith, and so presupposes the Rule of Faith. Also in the be-

beginning of his Argument he makes the *Prima Principles of Faith* (or *Unwritten Tradition* as he elsewhere calls it, that is, the same we mean by *Oral and Practicall*) evident in it self. And p. 40. he puts the *Question* between us and Protestants, to be *what is the external Infallible Ground unto which Divine Inspiration moveth men to adhere, that they may be settled in the true saving Faith.* Where, first, besides Gods grace moving us to every good Act, (which all Catholicks hold to be necessary) there is requisite, according to him, an *External Infallible Ground*; next, that without such a Ground a man cannot be settled in true saving Faith. Again, p. 38. coming to lay the ground of knowing any Doctrine to be Apostolical, he mentions none but onely *Publick Catholick Tradition* taught unanimously and perpetually by *Pastors*; which p. 37. he calls a *Rule Infallible*, and says that onely Hereticks charge it to be *Fallible*; where also he explains the meaning of his Principle, that [*The Apostolical Doctrine is the Catholick*] after this manner, *The Doctrine which is deliver'd from the Apostles by the Tradition of whole Christian Worlds of Fathers unto whole Christian Worlds of Children, &c.* Of this Tradition (which by the words now cited appears to be evidently the same I defend) he affirms (p. 38.) that *'tis prov'd to be simply Infallible by the very nature thereof*; and quotes *Suarez* to say that *'tis the highest degree of humane Certitude*; of which it may simply (or absolutely) be said [*Non posse illi falsum subesse*] that *'tis IMPOSSIBLE IT SHOULD BE FALSE.* Can any thing be
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produc'd more expressly abetting my way of Discouraging the Grounds of Faith? Nothing certainly, unless it be that which immediately follows, containing the reason why Tradition is *by the very nature of it simply Infallible*. For (says he) Tradition being full Report about what was **EVIDENT UNTO SENSE**, to wit, what Doctrines and Scriptures the Apostles publicly deliver'd unto the World, it is **IMPOSSIBLE** it should be **FALSE**; Worlds of Men **CANNOT** be uniformly mistaken and deceiv'd about a matter Evident to Sense; and, not being deceiv'd, being so many in number, so divided in place, of so different affections and conditions, **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE** they should so have agreed in their Tale, had they so maliciously resolv'd to deceive the World. Observe here, 1. That he alledges onely Natural Motives, or speaks onely of Tradition as it signifies the *Humane* Authority of the Church, that is, as taken in the same sense wherein I took it in my Method. 2. He goes about to show out of its very nature, (that is, to demonstrate) 'tis absolutely Infallible. 3. He makes this Tradition or *Humane Authority* of the Church an Infallible Deriver down or Ascertainer that what is now held upon that tenure is the *Apostles Doctrine*, or the *first-taught Faith*, which once known, those who are yet Unbelievers may infallibly know that Body that proceeds upon it to possess the true Faith, and consequently infallibly know the true Church; which being the very way I took in my Method, and other Treatises, it may hence be discern'd with how little reason Dr. T. excepts against it as *supra*porlatively singular. But

But to proceed. Hence p. 40. he avers that the proof of Tradition is so full and sufficient that it convinceth Infidels (that is, those who have onely natural Reason to guide themselves by.) For though (saith he) they be blind not to see the Doctrine of the Apostles to be Divine, yet are they not so void of common sense, impudent and obstinate as to deny the Doctrine of Christian Catholick Tradition to be truly Christian and Apostolical. And p. 41. The ONELT MEANS whereby men succeeding the Apostles may know assuredly what Scriptures and Doctrines they deliver'd to the Primitive Catholick Church, is the Catholick Tradition by Worlds of Christian Fathers and Pastors, unto Worlds of Christian Children and Faithful People : Which words as fully express that Tradition is the ONELY or SOLE Rule of Faith as can be imagin'd. And whereas some hold that an Inward working of God's Spirit supplies the Conclusiveness of the Motive, this Learned Writer p. 46. on the contrary affirms, that Inward Assurance without any EXTERNAL INFALLIBLE Ground to assure men of TRUTH, is proper unto the Prophets and the first Publishers of Christian Religion. And, lastly, (to omit others) p. 47. he discourses thus : If any object that the Senses of men in the Search may be deceiv'd through natural invincible Fallibility of their Organs, and so no Ground of Faith that is altogether Infallible : I answer, that Evidence had by Sense being but the private of one man, is naturally and physically Infallible ; but when the same is also Publiick and Catholick, that is, when a whole World of men concur with him, then his Evidence is

ALTO-

ALTOGETHER INFALLIBLE. And now I would gladly know what there is in any of my Books touching the Ground of Faith which is not either the self-same, or else necessarily consequent or at least very consonant to what I have here cited from this Judicious Author and Great Champion of Truth in his Days, whose Coincidency with other Divines into the same manner of Explication, argues strongly that it was onely the same unanimous Notion and Conceit of Faith and of true Catholick Grounds which could breed this conspiring into the same way of discoursing, and almost the self-same words.

§. 13. Hence is seen how justly D.T. when he wanted something else to say, still taxed me with singularity in accepting of nothing but *Infallibility built on absolutely-conclusive Motives*, with talking such *Paradoxes* as he doubts whether ever they enter'd into any other mans mind; that all mankind excepting J. S. have hitherto granted that no Humane Understanding is secur'd from possibility of Mistake from its own nature; that my Grounds exclude from Salvation, and excommunicate the Generality of our own Church; that no man before J. S. was so hardy as to maintain that the Testimony of Fallible men (which word [*Fallible*] is of his own adding, mine being of Mankind relying on Sensations) is *Infallible*: that this is a new way, and twenty such insignificant Cavils. But the thing which breeds his vexation is, that, as my Reason inclines me, I joyn with those who are the most solid and Intelligent Party of Divines, that is, indeed, I stick to, and pursue, and explain,

explain, and endeavour to advance farther those Grounds which I see are built on the natures of the Things. Would I one'y talk of Moral Certainty, Probabilities, and such wise stuff, when I am settling Faith, I doubt not but he would like me exceedingly; for then his own side might be *probable* too, which sandy Foundation is enough for such a Mercurial Faith as nothing but *Interest* is apt to fix.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VIII.

In what manner Dr. T. Answers my Letter of Thanks. His Attempt to clear Objected Faults by committing New Ones.

§. I. **M**Y Confuter has at length done with my *Faith Vindicated*, and my *Method*, and has not he done well, think you, and approv'd himself an excellent Confuter? He onely broke his Jest upon every passage he took notice of in the former, except *one*; without ever heeding or considering, much less attempting to Answer any *one* single Reason of those *many* there alledg'd; and as for that *one* passage in which he seem'd *serious*, viz. how the Faithful are held by me *Infallible* in their Faith, he quite mistook it throughout. Again, as for my *Method*, he first gave a wrong Character of it, and next pretended it wholly to rely upon a point which he had *sufficiently considered*, that is, which he had *readily granted*, but offer'd not one syllable of Answer to any one Reason in *It* neither. My *Letter of Thanks* is to be overthrown next; And, First, he says he *will wholly pass by the Passion of it*; and I assure the Reader so he does the Reason of it too, for he speaks not a word to any one piece of it. Next, he complains of the ill-
Language

Language; which he says *proceeded from a gall'd and uneasy mind*. He says partly true; For nothing can be more *uneasie* to me, than, when I expected a Sober and Scholar-like Answer, to find onely a prettily-worded Fardle of Drollery and Insincerity. I wonder what *gall'd* him when he lavish'd out so much *ill-language* in Answer to *sure footing*. in which Treatise there was not one passionate word, not one syllable of Irony, or any thing in the least of an impertinent nature, but a serious pursuit of the Point by way of Reason from the beginning to the end. It seems, there being in it no show of *Passion*, it was the *Reason* of it which *gall'd* and was so *uneasie* to him. What need was there to fall into such down right Rudeness as to call a Proposition of mine, for which I offer'd my Reasons, *most impudent*, (as did Dr. T. *Rule of Faith*, p. 173.) and in forty other places to make the *Droll* sup'ly the *Divine*? Was it not enough to answer the Reasons, and let the World judge? If he can show any such rude Language in my *Letter of Thanks*, I here blame myself for it, though it be *responsum non dictum*. The worst word I use is charging him with *falsifying* my words and sense; and it seems to me but hard Law, if he may take the liberty to commit such Faults frequently, and I may not so much as *name* his Faults, when 'tis my Duty as his Answerer to discover them.

§. 2. He would clear himself of some Faults objected; to do which, he summons together all his best Arts; First, he picks out generally what

can best bear a show of Reply. Next, he counterfeits a wrong Objection, and lastly, conceals in what manner and for what Reasons it was prest against him; and by this means he hopes to escape blame.

§. 3. First, he would justify himself for saying I went about to *explain* words, because my self said I would *examine well what is meant by them*, which seems equivalent to explaining them, but he conceals *what kind of explications* I deny'd my self to mean, and what he unjustly imputed twice in one page, (p. 3.) namely, *Definitions*; he conceals how he would needs make me intend to *define*, and yet most disingenuously put down himself at the same time my very words in which I disclaim'd any pretence to *define*, but onely to *reflect on some Attributes, Predicates or Properties* of what was meant by those words, that is, some pertinent and true Sayings concerning *Rule and Faith*; which though they in part explicate them, which I never deny'd; yet they are far from looking like those compleat *Explications* call'd *Definitions*, or even like those less artificial ones call'd *Descriptions*; or like those *Explications* industriously compil'd (which was the word I us'd) to adequate the intire notion of the word under consideration. For example, *Faith* being there taken for *Believing*, I come to discover it imports some kind of knowledge, and then argue from it *as such*, §. 8. Again, I affirm, §. 12. that the notion of the word *Faith*, bears that 'tis a *Perfection of the Soul, or a Virtue*; and thence discourse from it as it imports a *Virtue*. Also §. 16.

I affirm that *Faith* mainly conduces to *Bliss* or *Salvation* &c. and thereupon frame such a Discourse as is apt to spring out of such a Consideration. Now all these in part *explicate* the Thing, that is, *disclose* or say some Truth that belongs to its nature; yet not one of those sayings looks like an *Explication* of the word [FAITH] for this speaks an *Intireness* and an *Adequateness* to the notion explicated, which 'tis evident not one of these particular *Affirmations* or *Sayings* have the least show of. He conceals also what was a ledg'd *Letter of Thanks*, p. 6. (for indeed 'twas not creditable that candid Scholars should reflect on it) viz. that the word *Faith* being *Equivocal*, and sometimes signifying *Conscience*, sometimes *Fidelity* or *Honesty*, &c. I was necessarily to explain my self in what sense I understood it there, and to declare that I took it for *Belief*, and accordingly said, *Faith is the same with Believing*; which no sooner done, but my pleasant Confuter will needs have that expressing or clearing its distinct sense in *one single word* to be a *Definition* too, and plays upon it p. 3. with such affected *Raillery* as would make any sober man, unacquainted with the Arts he uses to escape the duty of replying, justly wonder. But I shall easily satisfy our Readers what's the true reason of this Carriage: He thought it not fit to give one word of a sober and solid Reply to any one of those many Reasons in that first discourse of mine (built all upon those *Affirmations* or *Predications* now spoken of) though this be the substantiallest part of my Book, and the Founda-

tion of the rest, on which I ground the Properties of a Rule of Faith, importing its *Absolute Certainty*; but neglecting all my Premises and Proofs he falls to deny my Conclusion, and talk something against it in his own way. So that 'tis evident these Jest's were to *divert* the Reader from the Point, and, so, serve instead of a *Confute* to that whole Discourse. A rare Method! signifying thus much, if candidly and plainly laid open, and brought to Terms of Reason; *Because I can pretend any thing and play upon it with Ironies prettily express'd, therefore (my kind unexamining friends being inclin'd to believe all I say to be Gospel) let my Adversary say what he will, he shall never be held to discourse solidly.* I charge him then afresh with an affected Disingenuity, design'd to palliate his neglect of answering; and let him know that (as 'tis manifest out of my Book) I built not there those seven Properties of the *Rule of Faith*, (the Reasons for which he to where refutes) on the Exactness, Intireness or Goodness of any (falsely-pretended) Definition or Explication, but on the Truth of those Propositions, or the Agreement of those Attributes or Properties to the respective natures of *Rule and Faith* as their Subjects. Also he may please to reflect that these being involv'd in the signification of those words, by discovering and then dilating upon each of those singly, I declare by consequence *what is meant by those words* as far as concerns my present purpose, without compiling *Explications*, or framing *Definitions*, which only were the Things I deny'd. Lastly, I charge

this

this Insincerity far more home upon him now than ever; that, whereas in my *Letter of Thanks* from p. 5. to p. 9. I had at large refuted these ridiculous Exceptions of his, he in this very place, where he pretends to speak particularly to my *Letter of Thanks*, never takes notice of any one word there alledg'd, but conceals all that had been produc'd to answer those Exceptions, and bears himself as if no such Answers had been given. This fault confess falls much short of either nibbling or gnawing; and I am forc'd to declare that this constant carriage of his, discovering too openly a perfect disregard of Truth, abates in me much of that respect which otherwise his good Endowments would naturally give me.

S. 4. His second Remembrance of my *Letter of Thanks* (for though he says here p. 32. he must not forget it, yet he has been perfectly unmindful of it hitherto) is, that I say, My Testimonies were not intended against the Protestants, whereas my Book was writ against them, and I declar'd the design of my Testimonies to be to second by Authority what I had before establish'd by Reason. All this is well, were there not (I fear) two mistakes in it. One, that I writ that Book against Protestants particularly; whereas it equally oppugns all that hold Christ and his Apostles to have taught true Doctrines, but deny the Churches Living Voice and Practice to be the means of conveying it down hither to, of what denomination soever they be. His second Mistake is, his not considering that the whole substance of a Book may be writ against such or such a

sort of men, and yet the whole way of managing is not be against or different from them, but from some particular Divines; who (as I conceiv'd) would better relish my Reasons if they saw all the several Conclusions deduc'd from them *seconded by Authority*: And this was the true Case. But Dr. T. is not to understand this till he be willing to acknowledge the Distinction between the Church and the Schools, which he is resolv'd he never will, lest it spoil his writing Controversie.

§. 5. But what I complain of is, That he objects I do this because I am *conscious of the weakness of those Testimonies*: By which words his partial Friends will easily conclude he had so *weakened* those Testimonies that I was not able to uphold them; whereas Letter of Thanks from p. 106. to p. 122. I very particularly reply'd to all he had alledg'd against them in his Rule of Faith, and gave an account of his performances in these words, p. 120. *This, Sir, is the upshot of your Skill in Note-Book Learning: The three first Testimonies from Scripture you answered not, mistaking what they were brought for; the fourth you omitted; you have given pitiful Answers to eight from the Fathers, (as I there shew'd) and shuffl'd off nine more without Answer, &c.* Which Charge, as to every Branch of it, I there make good particularly and he no where clears here, or attempts to clear, more than by barely saying that I am *conscious of the weakness of my Testimonies*. I think 'tis best for me to take the same Method, and say Dr. T. is *conscious of the weakness of all he has written*, and so in a price confute

fute all he has writ ; and with far better Reason than he can pretend to ; seeing any Feather will serve to sweep down such Cobweb stuff as his *Fair Probabilities*. Now Gentlemen, did Dr. T. let his Readers understand this Performance of mine, and this Neglect of his, it would not appear his Answers to these Testimones had been so *strong*, that my self had any cause to be *conscious of their weakness*, therefore (contrary to his promise) they were to be quite *forgotten* : it was but fitting and needful. Well, there have been perhaps many others equally-excellent in the Art of *Memory*, but, certainly, in that rare and useful Art of *Oblivion* he bears away the Bell from all Writers extant. By virtue of this, and the Assistance of that Fallacy in Logick call'd *non causa pro causa*, he obtains all his imaginary Victories.

§ 6. He comes next to clear himself of *False Citations* : and to let the Reader see how little I am to be trusted, he will instance in two or three ; and I heartily desire I may be no otherwise trusted, than as it shall appear upon severe examination of what we both alledge, that he is culpable, and my self Innocent. Now in culling out and managing his Instances, we may be sure he favours himself as much as he can handsomely ; the two first of them being trifles in comparison of many others omitted ; and neither of them charged by me as *false Citations* (whatever he pretends) meaning thereby adding, diminishing, or altering the words of the Author. Also the very first of these is the easiest to bear a tolerable explication of any one objected

in the Book. In examining which, I request our respective Friends to be severely impartial and attentive to what was imputed by me, and what answer'd by him; in doing which, Eye-sight is to be their best Guide. And, if I have to any degree wrong'd him, I shall not think it a jot prejudicial to my credit to declare that upon second thoughts I ought to mitigate or retract my words, according to the just degree the Truth of the thing shall require.

§. 7. I charg'd him with a *notorious abuse* of the Preface to *Rushworths Dialogues*, in citing the Author of it to say what he makes others say, and condemns them for saying it. To go securely to work, we are to put down first the words of the Prefacer, which are these: *This Term [Moral Certainty] every one explicated not alike, but some understood by it such a Certainty as makes the Cause always work the same Effect, though it take not away the absolute possibility of working otherways: others call'd that a Moral Certainty which, &c. A third Explication of that word is, &c. Of these three (says the Prefacer, who having related the opinions of others, now begins to speak his own sense) the first ought absolutely to be reckon'd in the degree of true Certainty, and the Authors consider'd as mistaken in undervaluing it: Am not I sure I shall never repeat in the same order all the words I have spoken this last year? Yet these men will say I am onely Morally Certain. Now the Question is, whether I did well or no, in blaming Dr. T. for imposing on the Prefacer to say that what consists with possibility of working other-*

otherwise is true Certainty; whereas that Author avows that to be true Certainty which [others said] took not away the possibility of working otherwise. What I affirm is, that he annexes not those words [though it take not away the possibility of working otherwise] to True Certainty, but onely adds them as explicating the Conceit of others; And that those words [when the Cause a'ways works the same Effect] contain the just notion of what he allows there for True Certainty. Dr. T. thinks the Contrary; and that he allows or approves that for True Certainty, which did not take away the possibility of working otherwise. To state the Case clearly, that we may see on whose side the fault lies, let us consider what was impud by me, what reply'd by him. My Charge is two fold; one blaming his Manner of putting it directly upon the Prefacer, by leaving out the words [Some understood, &c.] and so far is Evident. See the words of the Preface; **SOME UNDERSTOOD** by Moral Certainty, &c. See Dr. T. Rule of Faith, p. 132. [Lastly, Mr. Wh. doth **MOST EXPRESSLY** contradict this Principle of Ad. S's in these following passages. In his Preface to Mr. Rushworth HE SAYS that such a Certainty as makes the Cause always work the same Effect, though it take not away the absolute possibility of working otherwise ought absolutely to be reckoned in the degree of true Certainty. and those Authors are mistaken who undervalue it. Now, though, one who cites another ought to be allow'd the liberty of taking those words which express his Sentiments without putting them always in the very method

thod and posture in which they are found in the Author, while there is no ambiguity or doubt of the Authors sense in that place; yet where 'tis at least doubtful that the sense is otherwise, as is manifest to any one who reads that Preface, which, as I alledg'd, though Dr. T. never takes notice of it, was wholly intended to evince the Absolute Certainty of Faith, 'tis not so fairly and clearly candid to introduce it as a *most express saying* of an Author, and putting it directly upon him as *his saying*, whereas there at least needs a *Discourse* and the drawing some *Consequences* to prove it his Sense and Doctrine, (as will appear shortly) and on the other side, 'tis opposite to the whole strain and scope of the Treatise in which 'tis found: Thus far then I conceive my self in rigorous Truth justifiable, namely for imputing to Dr. T. that he left out the words [*Some understood*] for he *did* so, and by so doing put that saying directly upon the Prefacer himself, and express not that himself onely gathered it by consequence from his words.

§. 8. The chief and main part of the Charge is, That the imputed Tenet is not the sense of the Prefacers words in that place; and since he does not directly say it, but 'tis *inferred* onely from his approving an *others* Tenet (either in *whole* or in *part*) the Point is to be decided by such Reflexions as give us best Light of his Sense: In order to which, I alledge, 1. That the whole Scope of that Treatise is aim'd to prove the quite contrary Position; which Consideration being confessedly the best Interpreter of any Author, to neglect that,

that, and catch at any little semblance in two or three particular words, and then force upon that Author a Tenet perfectly contrary to what his whole Discourse is bent to prove, savours too strong of a Wit resolv'd to cavil. This I objected in my *Letter of Thanks*, and this Dr. T. thought it his best play not to take notice of here, for it was unanswerable, and too evidently concluded him injurious to the Preface. First, then, I desire the Reader to reflect that there is not any show of relating the *possibility* there spoken of to the Divine Omnipotence, but onely to the natures of *Second Causes*: next, that since every thing is what 'tis made to be, if those Causes can possibly work otherwise, the thing may be otherwise: These due Reflections made and settled, to those who have not leisure to read the whole Preface, I offer these particularities. P. 6. he blames those who bring not an **ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY**, or **COACTIVE** of the Understanding, and at the end of that §. he presses those who say these (Moral) Motives are such as all are oblig'd to yield to, to show how all can be bound to believe that which they evidently see **MAY BE FALSE**. And, which is remarkable, these Expressions are found in the §. immediately before the Citation D.T. so misrepresents, whence 'tis likely he could not but see and reflect on them. Again, p. 10. Else you will be forc'd to say, that the very way God Himself has shewn to Heaven, **MAY POSSIBLY** lead to Hell. P. 13. The formal part of our Action unless it carry **EVIDENCE and Certainty** with it, cannot be ventur'd on without reproach.

reproach. Now, as appears p. 12. he aims this discourse at Actions belonging to Faith, and answers, that is, opposes those who say the Reason or Ground of our Action need be no more but a high Probability, or Contingent, as a Thousand to One, &c. — P. 14. This necessity binds God to put an **INEVITABLE CERTITUDE** in the Motives of Faith. — P. 16. There is **NOTHING** advanc'd towards the **TRUTH** of the **ASSENT**, since this remains known, that the Position **MAY BE FALSE**, &c. And, to omit others, p. 20. he puts the Question whether a desultory Assent (which so agrees to this side, that the Believer sees it **FALLIBLE** —) be sufficient for Christian Life and Action? — and coming in the next §. to answer it, he calls this an **INCERTITUDE**, (or defect of Certitude) and declares that it makes a Religion either absolutely **NONE**, or not a **RATIONAL** one, but a **MEER FOLLY**. These Citations duly reflected on, it will appear very strange to any ingenuous man, that Dr. T. could easily imagine an Author, never noted till now to be given to contradict himself, who so expressly, in such and so many signal passages, and in the whole Tenour of that Discourse, say the very immediately foregoing §. manifests himself to hold that the Grounds of Faith cannot possibly lead men the wrong way, that they must be Evident and Inevitably Certain, that, if it may be False, we cannot assent to it at all as a Truth, that if the Believer sees 'tis Fallible, 'tis Irrational, a meer Folly to hold it, or else destructive of Religion; 'Tis strange, I say, to imagin that a Writer who is any thing in his wits, should

should put forth a Treatise purpose'y to evince the Absolute Certainty or Impossibility of Falshood in the Grounds and Motives to Faith; and in it so often and so particularly avow it, and yet in the same Treatise confess that *what's possible to be false is True Certainty*, and, so, a competent Ground to establish Faith on; that is, maintain the contrary Position to what he intended or pretended.

§. 9. Having thus amply made good this part of my charge laid against Dr. T. *Letter of Thanks*, p. 63. viz. That 'tis the plain tenour of the Prefacers Discourse, and the whole scope of that Preface, to force the direct contrary Position to what Dr. T. would so disingenuously have put upon him, of which he here takes no notice, nor gives account why he hath not to mind or regard that best way of interpreting an Authors words, or not to see so many clear Expressions against his Interest, rather than one obscure one seemingly for it, we come next to consider the particular words in the place cited, and see what strong temptation they could give Dr. T. to take him in a sense never intended, notwithstanding so many pregnant Evidences to the Contrary.

§. 10. The Prefacer said, that *Some understood by Moral Certainty such a Certainty as makes the Cause always work the same Effect, though it take not away the Absolute Possibility of working otherways*. He adds afterwards, that *this ought absolutely to be reckoned in the degree of true Certainty, and the Author considered as mistaken in undervaluing it*. And I must confess that to one who lights by accident on this

this single passage, taken abstractedly from the rest, and could reach no deeper than the Grammar or superficial placing of words, it bears at first sight a show as if the Prefacer had approv'd that to be a *True Certainty*, not onely when the Cause always works the same Effect, (as I take him to mean) but also when it takes not away the possibility of working otherwise, (in which sence Dr. T. understands him.) But I must avow that 'tis Impossible any rational deliberate man who endeavours to looke into the sence of words, can justly frame even hence any such imagination. For which I offer these Reasons:

1. That though the distinct Limits of *Moral Certainty* be unknown, yet in the general Conceit of those who use that word, particularly those alluded to here, *Moral Certainty* is that which consists with a possibility of being otherwise; wherefore *True Certainty* which is here counterpos'd to *Moral*, must be counterpos'd also to that which constitutes *Moral Certainty*, namely, to a Possibility to be otherwise.
2. Since *Absolute Certainty* is that kind of Certainty which is oppos'd to the *Moral* one, the *True Certainty* here mention'd must mean the same with *Absolute Certainty*, which is also avow'd and requir'd by that Author. p. 6. now cited; But 'tis acknowledged that *Absolute Certainty* excludes all possibility of Falsehood, therefore the *True Certainty* allow'd and approv'd here by the Prefacer, is that which has no Possibility of being False.
3. These things being so, viz. *Moral Certainty* being that which has annex to it possibility of Falsehood, and *Absolute* or *True Certainty* being confessedly inconsistent

sistent with it, 'tis unimaginable that he who blames
 any man for *mistaking* or *undervaluing* a thing for
Morally Certain, should not also blame him for
mistaking and *undervaluing* it as *possible to be False*;
 since this is annext in the conceit of those blame-
 worthy persons to *Moral Certainty*, as its proper
Constitutive and *Equivalent*. Also 'tis unconceive-
 able that he who approves a thing as *Truly* or *Absol-
 utely Certain*, should not also mean it *Impossible to
 be False*, this being the proper *Constitutive* (and
 consequently) *Equivalent* of *True* or *Absolute Cer-
 tainty*. 'Tis evident then that Authors sence can
 be no other than this, that *when the Cause always
 works the same Effect*, 'tis *True* or *Absolute Certainty*,
 and not *Moral Certainty* onely, and consequently
 that 'tis *Impossible to be false*: and that, those
 words which he added in their names, expressing it
 onely *Morally Certain* [though it take not away the
absolute possibility of working otherways] are utterly
 disapproved by him in his disapproving their calling
 it *Moral Certainty*, which is of the self-same no-
 tion. My Charge then is justify'd to a tittle, viz.
 that Dr. T. left out the words [*some understood*]
 and put upon the Prefacer to say it *most expressly*,
 whereas the Sense he imposes is *contrary to express
 words* of his in divers places, nay to the whole in-
 tention and drift of that Preface, and necessarily
 opposite to the *sence* of those words in that very
 particular place he cites for it. This is manifestly
 Dr. T's Fault; mine, if any, is this; that I might
 have mitigated the phrase, [*Notorious Abuse, &c*]
 and have been so wise as to consider that Dr. T.
 does

does not use to look so narrowly into the Sense of words as I still expect from him, nor regards the Antecedents or Consequents, as candid Adversaries use; but contents himself, with the first countenance they bear, right or wrong, especially if it make for his Interest; and hereupon I ought to have been more merciful to habitual Imperfections. I have been larger in clearing this Point, because I hear his Friends apprehend he has gain'd a notable advantage against me in this particular, and I dare even submit it to their Judgment, if Friendship will permit them to examine it with any degree of impartiality. I hope this will serve for an Instance how Dr. T. still misunderstands our Divines when he objects them against me; as also how far I have been from imposing any thing unjustly upon him in the least. God be praised, I do stand in need of such petty Crafts.

§. 11. In clearing himself of the next Fault objected, he is still himself, and I wish he did not still grow worse and worse. The Fallacy call'd *non causa pro causa*, or pretending a wrong Reason, which runs through half his performances, was never more needful than in this present conjuncture. I invite then even his best Friend Dr. St. himself to judge of the case, and desire him, having first read the p. 65. in my *Letter of Thanks*, to determine the point in Controversie. In that place I represented Dr. T. as quoting from *Rushworths Dialogues*, after himself had preambled (*Rule of Faith*, p. 144.) that probably it was prudent to cast in a few good words concerning Scripture [for the Satisfaction of Indiffe-

tent men who have been brought up in this verbal and
 apparent respect of the Scriptures] and then adding
 as a kind of Comment upon those words, [who it
 SEEMS are not yet arriv'd to that degree of Catho-
 lick Piety and Fortitude as to endure patiently the
 Word of God should be reviled or slighted.] Now
 this Preamble, & Comment introduc'd by [it seems]
 (that is, from those words he had cited) did put
 upon that Author, and by him on Catholicks, so
 unworthy and Invidious a meaning, that it oblig'd
 me to put down the rest of the words immediately
 following in the Dialogues, and omitted by Dr. T.
 that so I might clear the sober meaning and inten-
 tion of that Author from what he had so unhand-
 some'y impos'd; and (not troubling my self to re-
 peat over again what he had newly said) I intro-
 duc'd them thus; *Whereas in the place you cite he*
onely expresses [it would be a Satisfaction to indiffe-
 rent men to see the Positions one would induce
 them to embrace, maintainable by Scripture]
 Which done, I added as the Result of my whole
 Charge, [Which is so different from the Invidious
 MEANING your malice puts upon it, and so innocent
 and inoffensive in it self, that one would wonder with
 what Conscience you could thus WREST and PER-
 VERT it. Whence 'tis evident that my total Charge
 was of impressing an Invidious MEANING, of Wrest-
 ing and Perverting an innocent and inoffensive mean-
 ing; that he onely express'd (which words I immedi-
 ately subjoyned after the Doctors Comment, and
 not after Rushworths words) it would be a Satisfac-
 tion, &c.—to see those Positions maintainable by scrip-
 ture;

pture; nor was there in the whole Charge any Controversie about the *right or wrong*, perfectly or imperfectly quoting the WORDS. This being evident, as it will be to any ordinary Understanding that guides it self by Eye-sight and Common Sense, let us see what disingenuous ways Dr. T. uses to escape blame. 1. He never in the least mention'd his imposing upon those words an *Invidious Meaning*, or of *wresting an innocent and unoffensive* [Intention,] which was *sotely* objected; whence he is so far from clearing himself from the Fault imputed, that (out of an over-tender kind-heartedness to his own Credit) he not so much as *names* it, or takes notice of it. Next, instead of that, he substitutes a False Charge, never dream't on by any man but himself; namely, that I deny'd those Words [who have been brought up in this verbal and apparent respect of Scripture] to be found in Rushworth; whereas there is not a syllable to that purpose in my Book. Thirdly, to give Countenance to this False Charge, those words of mine, [whereas in the place you cite he *onely* expresses] which in me were immediately subjoyned to his Comment, and were evidently design'd to restrain that Author's words to a Sense different from what he had impos'd, he here joyns immediatly after the very Words themselves, though there were three or four lines between one and the other. By this stratagem making the Reader apprehend the word [*onely*] was exclusive or negative of *more words* found in Rushworth; whereas by the whole tenour of the Charge, by all the words which express it, and lastly,

lastly, by the placing those words, [*he onely express*] immediately after his unhandsome Comment, 'tis most manifest they onely excluded any Ground or occasion of so strange a misconstruction, and aim'd not in the least at denying any other words, but onely at clearing that this was that Authors sole Intention. Yet in confidence of these blinding Crafts, and that his unexamining Readers will believe all he says, he sounds the triumph of his own Victory in this rude and confident manner, *Certainly one would think that either this man has no Eyes or no Forehead.* I will not say as Dr. T. does here in a Sermon preach'd against himself, p. 123. that a little wit, and a great deal of ill-nature will furnish a man for *surge*; onely I must say that the tenth part of this Rudeness in another (though justly occasion'd too) would have been call'd *Passion and ill Language*. But I see what's a most horrid Sin in the abominable Papist, is still a great Virtue in the Saints. On this occasion since he is so *hox* and *Rustick*, I must be serious with him, and demand of him publickly in the face of the World Satisfaction for this Unjust Calumny; and, that I may not be too rigorous with him, I will yield him innocent in all the rest, if he clears himself of this one passage in which he counterfeits the greatest Triumph and Victory; Of *this* Fault, I say, which he has newly committed, even then when he went about to clear himself of a former.

§. 12. His last Attempt is to give an account why he added that large-senc'd Monosyllable [*All*] to my words, which is the onely *False Citation* he

hath yet offer'd to Examination; the former two not being objected as *such*, whatever he pretends. Now the Advantage he gains by adding it, is manifestly this, that if that word be added, and that I indeed say, *The greatest Hopes and Fears are strongly apply'd to the minds of ALL Christians*, it would follow that no one Christian in the world could apostatize, or be a bad man; which being the most ridiculous position that ever was advanc'd, and confutable by every days experience, his imposing this Tenet on me, by virtue of this Addition, is (as he well expresses it, *Serm. p. 87.*) putting me in a *Fools Coat* for every Body to laugh at. I appeal'd (*Letter of Thanks, p. 66, 67.*) to Eye-sight, that no such word was ever annex't to the words now cited, and thence charg'd him with *falsifying*; He would clear himself, in doing which, he denies not that *he added* the word *All*, (this was too evident to be cloak'd) but he gives his reason *why* he added it, on this manner: He alledges my words, that *Christian Doctrine was at first unanimously settled in the minds of the Faithful, &c. — and firmly believ'd by [all] those Faithful to be the way to Heaven.* Therefore, infers Dr. T. since in the pursuit of the Discourse 'tis added, that *the greatest Hopes and Fears were strongly apply'd to the minds of the First Believers*, those *First Believers* must mean *ALL those Faithful* spoken of before, and the same is to be said of the *Christians in after Ages.* This is the full force of his Plea: My Reply is, That I had particular reason to add the word [*All*] in the former part, where I said that *That Doctrine was*
firmly

Firmly believ'd by ALL those faithful, for they had not been Faithful had they not firmly believed it, and yet had equal reason to omit it when I came to that passage, (the greatest motives were strongly apply'd to the minds of the first Believers), because I have learn'd of our B. Saviour that many receive the word, that is believe and gladly too, yet the thorny cares of this world (to which I add Passions and ill Affections springing from Original Sin) choak the Divine Seed and hinder it from fructifying; whereas, had it had the full and due effect which its nature requir'd, it had born Fruit abundantly, Now, since those Motives are of themselves able to produce it in all, and oftentimes convert the most indispos'd, that is, the most wicked Sinners, I conceive this happens for want of due Application making the Motives sink deep into the Understanding Power so as to make it conceit them heartily (which vigorous Apprehension we use to call Lively Faith) nothing else being required to any effect but the Agents Power over the Patients indisposition, and a close Application of the Power to the Matter tis to work upon: Which kind of Application being evidently not made to All, there was no show of reason why I should put that word in that place, and much less that Dr. T. should put it for me: I was forc't indeed to name the word Believers, because it was impossible to conceive that those Motives should be strongly apply'd to the Minds of Jews or Heathens. Again, I was forc't to express it plurally, since no sober man can doubt but the doctrine of Faith

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sunk deep into the hearts or wills of more than
some one, and thence wrought in them through
Charity: but that I should mean by that word
 onely *plurally* express a Number of Believers, hav-
 ing those Motives strongly applyed to them, E-
 qual to those who *firmly believed* or were Faithful,
 is unconceivable by any man who looks into the
sense of words; this being the same as to appre-
 hend that all who *believe* speculatively; lay to heart
 those Motives to good Life which Faith teaches
 them; a thing our daily Experience confutes.
 Moreover, I endeavoured to prevent any such Ap-
 prehension in my very next words after my Prin-
 ciples, which were these [*This part, it follows as cer-*
tainly that a GREAT NUMBER of the first Believ-
ers and after faithful would continue, &c. Now,
 these words [*a Great number of the first Believers*]
 having most evidently a *Partitive* sense, that is,
 signifying onely a *Part* or *some* of them, it might
 seem strange to any Man that knows not Dr. T's
 might in such performances and that nothing is
 Impossible for him to mistake, who will do it be-
 cause he must do it, that he *could* interpret
 those very same words [*First Believers*] to mean *all*,
 not one excepted. 'Tis a trifling Evasion then to
 hope to come off by saying as he does here p.
 36. *If it contradict what he says elsewhere it is no*
new or strange thing; For this is not elsewhere or
 another place, but the same place, and the very
 next words to my Principles (as is seen Sure-f. p.
 60.) The badness of which excuse shows he is in-
 excusable. But this is not all; that discourse ends
 not

not there, but goes on at least two Leaves farther clearing that very point; and in the process of it these words are found p. 63. To say it preserves None good is to question Christs wisdom, &c. A GREAT PART therefore would be virtuous, &c. A BODY of Traditionary Christians would still be continued, —

p. 64. All which wayes and Objects thus easily and strongly applicable were frequently and efficaciously apply'd by the Education of Parents and the discipline and Oeconomy of the Church, which brings those speculations to practice, was ever, and must needs reach the GENERALITY, — p. 65. must still continue in SOME GREAT MULTITUDE. All these expressions in the self-same Discourse and on the self-same Subject, perfectly explicated my sense to be that that Plural word (Believers) did not reach all, not one excepted. This then is Dr. T's habitual imperfection which runs through all his Mock-Answer to Sure footing. He has no patience to take any intire Discourse of mine into his Consideration, or grapple with the full import of it; but he catches at some word at the beginning or by the way which seems easiest to be misinterpreted, and whereas any candid man would guide himself by the annex or concomitant words, and the whole scope of the Discourse, Dr. T. is got beyond those too-ingenuous considerations, and knowing very well, as he expresseth it *Serm. p. 121.*

that nothing is so easie as to take particular Phrases and Expressions out of the best Book in the world, and abuse them by forcing an odd and ridiculous sense upon them, he exactly observes that method, and abuses some Expression or word by forcing (in de-

spight of all the concomitant circumstances conspiring to rectifie him) an odd and ridiculous sense upon it; and then lest those rectifying passages annexed should rise up in judgment against him and accuse him to the candid Reader of imposing a sense never intended by the Author 'tis but accusing that Author of contradicting himself, and all's well. Thus heul'd the Prefacer p. 30. me in this very place, in these words *If it contradict what he says elsewhere 'tis no new or strange thing; and Sure-footing in most of those places which he wilfully misconstrued throughout his Rule of Faith.* By this rare Stratagem gaining two notable Advantages against any Author, whereas not so much as one was offered; First, making him talk ridiculously; next, making him contradict himself. Both of them built upon another of Dr. T's firm Principles, which is this; *No Author shall be allow'd to interpret his own meaning, but that shall be his sense which I please to put upon any particular Expression of his; by adding words to it or otherwise glossing it as seems best for my advantage; and if he offers to be so wary as to annex other words which would interpret his meaning to be otherwise, he is a Fool and contradict himself.* Now, though this Principle which grounds this Procedure be an odd one, yet Dr. T. holds faithfully to what he has once espoused, and were it now seasonable, I durst undertake to reckon up twenty places in his *Rule of Faith*, where he vaunts himself thus doubly victorious by making use of this one Artifice.

6. 13. But in case that plural word had *seem'd* to him to infer an *Universality*, why could he not content himself with giving his reason why it *seem'd* to follow thence? Had he done this none could have accus'd him of falsifying: for every one has liberty to offer his conceit, and the reason why he judges so, without meriting or incurring any harsher note than that of a *mis-reasoner*. Whereas now, his carriage exposes him justly to these Exceptions. First, That he went not about to infer or gather what he imposes, but (*Rule of Faith*, p. 163.) he makes me in express terms and directly say that *greatest hopes and fears are strongly apply'd to the minds of ALL Christians*; whereas in my words put down by himself, p. 162. no such thing as [*all*] is found annex'to those words. Next, that the word (*all*) which he added, was put in the same Italicke Letter in an even tenor with those other words which were indeed mine; as may be seen in the place now cited. Thirdly, that his whole Attempt in that place, is merely to confute that word [*all*] which himself had inserted, as may be seen *Letter of thanks*, p. 77. where I instanc'd in nine or ten places in which he combated that single word of his own adding and nothing else; and (as I there shew'd from p. 78. to p. 86.) went forwards to make out that pretence by falsifying evidently my sense and sometimes my words too, in three or four places more. Fourthly, That (*Rule of Faith*, p. 165: 1. 3.) he tells the Reader I SAY EXPRESSLY, those Causes are put in ALL the Faithful actually causing: by this means endeavouring to perswade the Reader 'tis not

not his own interpretation or deduction from some words of mine, but my own *express words*; which is a *most express falsification*. Lastly, he neglects to take notice of any of those words which *manifestly* and *expressly* show'd my Tenet to be quite *contrary* to what he impos'd. This is my total charge against him; of which we hear *very little* or rather nothing in this Preface where he goes about to clear it; onely he sayes: that those *First Believers* to whom those *Hopes and Fears* were *strongly apply'd*, must by the tenour of my words mean *all the Faithful* dispers'd over several parts of the world, and so all the Christians of that Age, and for the same reason of the following ones; which is the very thing I deny, and have given lately my reasons why they could not. Besides, every Scholar knows that Authors first speak *short* and in *common*, and afterwards, when they come to explain themselves, *more particularly*; and had he been pleas'd to contain his rare gift of misinterpreting till the very next line to my Principles, woven in the tenour of the same Discourse, which he pretends to build his mistake upon, he had found the *express contrary* to his Additional [All] viz. *A Great number or Body of the first Believers and after-Faithful*, the direct sense of which words is *not all*, but *some onely*. Again, what if I us'd the word *Faithful* first, and put to it the word *All*, joyned with such words as would bear that *universal Expression*, must needs follow that when I name the same word *Plurally* afterwards, I must needs mean *all* of the

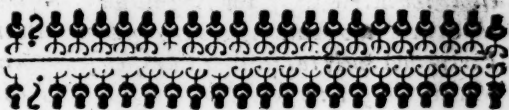
versality again, even though I joyn it this second time with words of a quite different Sense? Imagine I had said, that *All Historians write of matters of Fact*, and then had subjoyn'd a little after that *Historians write of King Pepin*, must I needs mean by *Historians* onely *plurally* except it when I come to name them the second time, *All Historians*, nor one excepted, *write of King Pepin*? What Logic but Dr. T's, who defies all Principles, could ever stumble upon such a Paradox!

§. 15. To conclude this matter. All these particularities here related, being well examin'd by Eye-sight and weigh'd by Reason, 'tis impossible any Candid Considerer, however he may favourably judge Dr. T. mistaken in words which at first sight bore such a semblance to one who read but half the Discourse, can for all that excuse him from great Rashness and strong Inclinations to draw every thing in his Adversary to a sinister sense, and to take him up before he is down. But I must farther say, that the Constancy he shews in this kind of Carriage, and the Interest which evidently accrues by it to his Cause, and himself as a Writer, (which is at once to make his Adversary talk like a *Madman* and *Self-Contradictor* both, and divert the Readers Attention from the true Point, and by that means avoid the duty of Answering) discover too palpably 'tis a willing and designed Mistake. What that signifies, let others Judge, without putting me still to name it. I am heartily weary of such Drudgery.

§. 16. And so I take my leave of this pretty Preface, which

which has not one word of Reason in it, but built on Mistake; nor one good Excuse for so many bad Faults. But pretends to speak to *three* Treatises of mine, without taking notice candidly of so much as *one* Argument in *any* of them, and is a meer Endeavour by multitudes of impertinent and insignificant Scoffs to make some plausible show of an Answer, for those merrily-conceited Readers to sport at, who fancy such frothy Talk far above solid Reasoning. In which pleasant strain consists also his Friend Dr. *Sr's* greatest Talent. Whence, the Comedian in their performances supplies the Divine; and *Plautus* with his fellows is by far more propitious, useful, and influential to their Imaginary Victories, than *Aristotle*, and all the Learned Authors in the world who write Sence or Logick. And as these Comick Controvertists affect the same *Manner* of writing which those *Stagers* did, so their *End* and *Aym* is the *same* too, viz. not to propose any thing like exact Knowledge to men truly Learned, but merely *Populo ut placerent quas fecissent Fabulas.*

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The Conclusion.

Containing

The AUTHOR'S REQUEST

To the Knowing Candid

WITS of This Nation.

T*His being the Genius of my Adversary, such his Method of Answering my Books, and yet his numerous Party hazarding to over-bear Reason with Noise, at least in the Esteem of vulgar Scholars, making up the Generality; who are not able to weigh either*

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either the Strength of the Arguments, or the Worth of the Authorities engag'd for either Party, but only to number them, or scan their Multitude; I am forc'd to Appeal to You, our Learned Umpires, offering You these few Proposals; with my humble Request, that, if You find them reasonable, and agreeable to the Maxims of Learning, or the clearing of Truth, Mankind's best Interest, You would be pleas'd in all handsome occasions to use your Power with Dr. T. and his Friends, and solicit a due compliance with them.

1. That this Extrinsecal and Ignoble way of answering Arguments with Persecution and Railings, may be left off; and that when the Reason too much presses, it may not be held Supplemental to the Duty of Replying, to cry out **POPERY**. Particularly, that they would please to consider how improper this Carriage were on this occasion, in case it had been otherwise laudable in it self, seeing the onely Point maintain'd by me here, is this, That Christian Faith is Absolutely or Truly Certain.

2. That when the Point depends intirely on Reason, and not on the (miscall'd) Authority of Speculators, it may not be held a just Disproof
of

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of my Arguments to alledge the different ^{with} Sentiment of some Speculative Divines; since that Carriage supposes as its Maxim, the Truth of this Proposition [That cannot be True which all School-Divines do not agree to.] Wherefore unless he first makes out this to be a Truth to be proceeded and rely'd on, this way of arguing, which takes up no small part of Dr. T's Controversial Writings, is convinc'd to be altogether Impertinent.

3. That Dr. T. would himself please to follow that Doctrine which in his Sermons he so oft and so pressingly inculcates to others; and that, in handling this grave and important Point, all Raillery, Drollery, Irony, Scoffs, Feers, rude and bitter Sarcasms, breaking of Jest, and such-like Attempts of vain and frothy Wit, or splendid Efforts of peevish Zeal, which so abound in his Rule of Faith, and in a manner wholly compose this Preface, be totally superseded, and onely Serious Reason made use of. To oblige him to which Sober Demand, I promise on my part, That, though these being here my onely Confuters, I was forc'd at present to give them sometimes their proper Answers by retorting now and then his own Language, onely better apply'd; yet in my future

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ture Writings I shall seriously pursue the Proof of the Point, without minding at all his Imperinencies; that is, I shall rigorously observe the same sober Strain, which, as my own Inclinations lead me, I follow'd in Sure-footing, Faith Vindicated, and my Method; till Dr. T. seeing it his Interest to avoid Answering in a solid manner, or closing by way of rigorous Discourse with my Arguments, thought it his best play to bring the Controversie out of the Way of Reason into that of Burlesque. Also that all Childish Cavilling at Inelegancies or hard Words, at want of Rhetorick in a circumstance where none was intended or needful; at my being the first that said (he should have said prov'd) this or that, be for the same Reason laid aside, as Things perfectly Useless towards the Clearing of Truth. As likewise that it be not held and imputed as Confidence, to maintain Faiths Absolute Certainty, or any Point else, for which I offer my Reasons; nor to pretend to Self Evident Principles and Absolutely-Conclusive Proofs or Demonstrations; whereas the Circumstance and Matter to be prov'd, nay the very Name of a Scholar renders it shameful to pretend or produce any thing of an Inferiour Strength, in case I aim'd
at

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at winning others to assent to my sayings. But above all I request that none of these trifling ways be made use of to supply the want of pertinent Reason, or make up the Whole Confute, as is practis'd throughout this Preface; but that Reason, where-ever it is found, may have its due and proper Return, Reason.

4. That, while he goes about to reply to my Arguments, he would please to use my words, and not insert others of his own, and then combat them instead of me. Or, if he undertakes to speak to my Reasons themselves, that he would take the full import of them, and not still catch at and then play upon some word or two which he can most easily seem to misunderstand, so to divert the Discourse. A Method so constantly observ'd in his Reply to Sure-footing, where he made Witty Dexterity still supply the place of Pertinent Solidity; that instead of [Rule of Faith] it ought more justly have been entitled Sure-footing Travesty.

5. And since all Discourse is ineffectual which is not grounded on some Certain Truth, and consequently not onely he who settles or builds, but also he who aims to overthrow, or the Objecter, must ground his Discourse on some Certain Principle, if he intends to con-

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vince the others Tenet of Falsehood, that Dr. T. would therefore esteem it his Duty, even when he objects, to ground his Opposition upon some Firm Principle. And since no pretended Principle can be Firm, but by virtue of some First Principle, and that Dr. T. has disclaim'd here Identical Propositions to be such, 'tis requisite that he either confute my Discourses produc'd in this Treatise proving First Principles to be of that nature, and show some other way by which the Terms of those he assigns for such do better cohere, or he is convinc'd to have none at all; and so all he writes or discourses must be Groundless and Insignificant.

6. Thus much in common for the Manner of his Writing. As for his Matter, I request he would not in the subject of this present Discourse, about the Certainty of a Deity and Christian Faith, hover with ambiguous Glosses between Certainty and Uncertainty, that is, between Is and Is not; but speak out Categorically, and plainly declare whether he holds those Points absolutely True; that is, whether they be absolutely True to us; or whether any man in the world can with reason say he sees they are True, or has any Reason or Argument to conclude them True. If not, then let him show how

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'tis avoidable but all the World must with Truth say, Both these may be False, for any thing they can discern; than which, nothing sounds more horrid and blasphemous to a Christian Ear. If he says there are such Reasons extant, but he has them not, then let him leave off attempting to settle those Tenets, or writing on those Subjects, since he confesses himself unqualify'd and unfurnish'd with means to manage them. If he says there are such Proofs, and that he has them, let him produce them, and stand by them, and not blame the nature of Things for bearing no more, and others for saying they have more, and that the Things do bear more. To express my self closer and more particularly; Let him speak out ingenuously and candidly to these *Queries*, Whether he holds that God's Church, or any man in the World, is furnish'd with better Grounds for the Tenet of a Deity or for Christian Faith, or any stronger Reasons to prove these Points True, than those in *Joshua's* and *Hezekiah's* time had or could have the day before, that the Sun should not stand still or go back the next day; than that Person who threw a Glass on the Ground which broke not, had or could have that it would not break; than the Inhabitants of divers Houses had that

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they would not suddenly fall, which yet did so; or, lastly, to use his own words, than those Reasons are which satisfy Prudent Men in Humane Affairs, in which notwithstanding they experience themselves often mistaken? If he say he has, let him produce them, and heartily maintain them, and endeavour to make them out, and I shall hereafter express as much Honour for him, as I have done here of Resentment and Dislike, for advancing the contrary Position. But if he profess he has no better, or that (the nature of the thing not bearing it) there can no better be given, then 'tis unavoidable, first, that the most Sacred Tenets of a Deity's Existence, and all the Points of Christian Faith may be now actually False, since Points which had Reasons for them of Equivalent strength did prove actually such. Next, that no man in the world is (in true Speech) Certain there is a God, or that the least word of Christian Religion is True; since 'tis Nonsense to say any of those Persons (in those former Instances of equivalent strength) were or could be truly Certain of Points which prov'd actually False, and in which themselves were mistaken. In a word, I would have him without disguise let the world know whether, as there was Contingency in those

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those Causes, and so the imagin'd or hoped Effects in the former Instances miscarried, and prov'd otherwise than was expected, so there be not also Contingency in the Motives for those two most Sacred Tenets, upon whose Certainty the Eternal Good of Mankind depends, so as they may perhaps not conclude, and so both those Tenets may perhaps be really and actually otherwise than we Christians now hold. If he professes to embrace this wicked Tenet, (and his words are too expresse for it ever to be deny'd, though upon second thoughts I hope they may be retracted) he owes me an Answer to my Faith Vindicated, which hitherto he has shuffled off without any at all, and to my Reasons alledg'd in this Treatise for the same Point, FAITH'S ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY.

Now, Gentlemen, since nothing conduces more to Knowledge in any kind, than that the Matter of the Dispute be unambiguously stated, and clearly understood, and that a solid Method be observ'd in the managing it, I become a humble Petitioner to your Selves, as you tender that Excellent Concern of Mankind, and that most Sacred One of Christianity, to use your best Interest with Dr. T. that he would please to yield to these Duties here exprest; and I oblige
my

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my self inviolably to observe the same Carriage towards him, which I here propose and press he would use towards me; which if he refuse, I declare I shall leave him to the Censure of all truly-Learned and Ingenuous Persons, however he triumphs amongst Those who are great Admirers of Pretty Expressions; resting assured that your selves will not only hold me Unblameable, but also highly Commendable for not losing my precious time in reciprocating his trifling and insignificant Drollery.

Your True Honourer and
Humble Servant,

J. S.

F I N I S.

Talis
Vita qualis.

AMENDMENTS.

Page 1. line 21. read that both first, p. 47. l. 3. self, possible
 to, p. 50. l. 20. solid, p. 101. l. 6, 7. possible all this may,
 p. 115. l. 12. Judgment in which it is, l. 25. can never, p. 118.
 l. 26. resolute hatred, p. 121. l. 23. did equivalently, p. 124. l. 21.
 & 28. Speculators, p. 127. l. 17. nay more, p. 135. l. 7. to be,
 p. 139. l. 18. greater degree, p. 142. l. 2. is not true, or not to
 dare, p. 146. l. 14. Chimerical, p. 157. l. 16. Fourth Eviction,
 l. 18. of the Sixth, p. 162. l. 16. Sermons equally, p. 163. l. 27.
 Parallelepiped, p. 166. l. 30. Predicate, p. 176. l. ult. all good,
 p. 183. l. 28 sensible man may, p. 184. l. 2. deduc'd there, p. 186.
 l. 12. of discoursing the, p. 199. l. 25. it is, is not more, p. 200.
 l. 16. of its own, p. 212. l. 24. not the Rule, dele *express*, p. 218.
 DISCOURSE IX. p. 219. l. 13, 14. Reason in it--- p. 219. l. 28,
 29. the Authors mistaken in undervaluing it, p. 234. l. 17. I do
 not stand. p. 239. l. 5. apply'd, l. 6. I had. p. 81. C. 17. 27
 & p. 82. C. 7. *difficult*. p. 75. l. 26. *united*
~~from~~. p. 101. l. 6. *possible*. all this may